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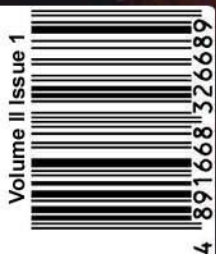
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Hunting Wolfpacks



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Beginnings, Endings, and Transitions

This long-awaited issue of the Online Journal is many things. It's the first new issue in over a year and a half. It's the first one with a real staff (rather than just Tim "Nealos" Salam and myself), including custom art by members of the SWAG. It's the first issue published since the end of STAR WARS Gamer, and the first to feature d20 stats as well as D6, serving both parts of the STAR WARS gaming community. It represents what all of us hope will be a new beginning for the Online Journal. And it is also my last issue as Editor.

It has been my pride and pleasure to help bring the Journal to you. But just as Nealos has had to retire from his webmaster duties due to the demands on his time, so have I found that my focus has shifted to other things. It is my firm belief that the Journal deserves nothing less than my most professional effort - and as I am no longer able to give that, it is best that I step down and let others take over, people as committed to the success of the Journal as I once was. My conscience is eased by knowing I leave this publication in their capable hands.

In this issue, you'll find what may or may not be my final contribution to the Journal: an article for a new column called "Dice, Camera, Action." Perhaps in the months to come, my name will appear in these pages again, this time as an author... "Difficult to say. Always in motion is the future."

-- Kelly St.Clair

THE WOLF PACK

by Mark O'Brien

"I hear you're up to your neck in snowmen and you're looking for a mercenary outfit to carry out a 'special assignment.' Well you can stop looking 'cause I've got your answer right here: the Wolfpack. They're a small, ten-member unit specializing in ground combat out here on the Rim. Take my word for it, these guys are good. The job will be nothing more than a Lum Run for these guys and they'll have your Imp infestation taken care of in no time.

"The merc commander, some soldier by the name of Tombs, supposedly has a knack for dealing with Imperial entanglements. Rumor has it that he use to be one of the Imps' lackeys right here on Damuji before he 'retired' to go into business for himself as a soldier-for-hire. The Wolfpack is definitely your best bet but be prepared to pay a little extra as their services don't come cheap."

—Overheard comment in the Crossroads Cantina,
Menduta Spaceport, Damuji.

The Wolfpack

The Wolfpack got its name from the snow-wolves of the mercenary commander's homeworld of Kabaira (see Passages by Charlene Newcomb, Star Wars Adventure Journal, no. 7, pp. 242-270). Derren Tombs, the merc outfit's commander, has a domesticated dire wolf named Stang that often accompanies the mercenaries in the field on insurgency missions.

The Wolfpack started out as a five-member mercenary unit, but following a mission for the planetary government on Pludef VI, five more beings entered the fold. Now a ten-member unit, the Wolfpack specializes in ground combat and anti-Imperial insurgency and, on occasion, infiltration missions out on the Outer Rim. The Wolfpack usually only accepts contracts involving low-priority, Imperial-held backwater worlds lacking adequate air support.

The Wolfpack is an unusually honorable mercenary

The dire wolf is a canine indigenous to Kabaira. Ask any zoologist and he will tell you that a dire wolf is really just a black phase of the white snow-wolf. However, ask any Kabairan game hunter and he will tell you that the dire wolf is much more aggressive than the typical snow-wolf. There have even been reports of dire wolves attacking humans, but such reports have yet to be confirmed. In sum, the same species, just different reputations. Dire wolves are very rare and only an estimated one in every one hundred snow-wolves are black. Most dire wolves are male. The snow-wolves are found in the mountains of the two large island continents of Maderi and Belshain in Kabaira's northern hemisphere. The snow-wolves are social animals that live in packs of up to thirty. The strongest male of the pack, normally a dire wolf, has dominance over the entire pack. The pack works together on a hunt, either chasing down its prey, usually by slashing tendons in the prey's hindlegs with serrated claws, or forcing it to circle back to pack members waiting in ambush.

Stang's statistics are identical to that of a dire wolf in the wild. Statistics for the snow-wolf are the same as the dire wolf except Dexterity 4D, brawling parry 4D+1, Strength 3D, and brawling 4D.

Stang - D6

Type: Domesticated dire wolf

DEXTERITY 4D+2

Brawling parry 5D+1, dodge 4D+2, running 6D

PERCEPTION 3D+2

Search: tracking 5D, sneak 6D

STRENGTH 4D

Brawling 5D, climbing/jumping 4D+1, stamina 5D, swimming 4D+2

Special Abilities:

Claws: A dire wolf's serrated claws inflict STR+1D+1 damage.

Teeth: A dire wolf's needle-sharp teeth inflict STR+2D damage.

Move: 15

Size: 0.8 meters tall at shoulder, up to 1.9 meters long including tail

Scale: Creature

Stang - d20

Stang: Predator 4; **Init** +4 (+4 Dex); **Defense** 15 (+4 Dex, +1 size); **Spd** 12m; **VP/WP** 36/17; **Atk** +7 melee (1d4+3, 2 claws) or **Atk** +7 melee (2d4+3, teeth); **SV** Fort +4, Ref +6 (+2 Lightning Reflexes), Will +1; **SZ** S; Str 17, Dex 19, Con 17, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 11

Skills: Climb +4, Jump +4, Listen +5, Move Silently +11, Spot +5, Swim +5

Feats: Lightning Reflexes, Endurance

group and they have a reputation for completing every contract they have taken for the same side that hired them to begin with. (Rumors abound that on several assignments, the very crime syndicates that Tombs and his group were sent to overturn offered the mercs more money to break contract than what the contract was paying. Tombs promptly refused such offers, staying true to the original contractor.)

Tombs certainly has no love for the Empire seeing as they have a death mark out for him. While Tombs' handiwork seems to be aiding the Rebellion, Tombs has turned down all contracts working directly for the Republic. Although the Republic doesn't perceive Tombs as a threat, they have placed a 5,000 credit bounty on his head for unsanctioned military practices. The bounty has been extended to other members of the Wolfpack as well. All are to be taken alive as they are wanted for questioning by Republic officials.

The Wolfpack chooses anti-Imperial contracts simply because the Empire already has bounties out for many of its members. The Empire is also in shambles. Now nothing more than a few independent factions squabbling for control of territories, the Wolfpack figures that a full-scale manhunt is not very imminent. The Imperial remnants are just too busy vying for control amongst themselves to dedicate enough time and energy into tracking the mercs down, regardless of how long their Imperial tractsheets may be. And although he would never admit it, Tombs has a streak of kindness in him, feeling sympathetic to all those subjugated by the Empire.

The Wolfpack has been involved in a number of assignments of varying length and difficulty, not all of which have involved the Empire. These have included anti-piracy missions for corporations and shutting down crime syndicates for planetary governments. The Wolfpack has only engaged in two major anti-Imperial operations. Their first assignment was to fill the ranks of the government's army on Pludef VI in order to oust a psychotic Imperial Moff attempting to gain control of the planet. The Wolfpack was just one of the dozen mercenary groups hired to assault the Imperial garrison's contingent of stormtroopers while another mercenary infiltration team penetrated the garrison's outer defenses in order to assassinate the Moff and his stormtrooper protectorate. (See Ruhne Marcum's capsule for more information pertaining to this assignment.)

For their second major anti-Imperial assignment, the Wolfpack was hired to assist some religious partisans engaged in a holy war. The Empire had garrisoned the planet of Oinarr in the Outer Rim because of an interest in the planet's abundant mineral and ore deposits.

The planet's population was divided into two religious factions: the peaceful Crinuites and the warlike Mandetis. Prior to the Empire's arrival, there had been no friction between the two sects despite their obvious differences and they had lived together in peace for centuries. Before the Imperial forces revealed themselves to the populace, one of the sacred temples belonging to the Mandetis religious sect was destroyed (by Imperial saboteurs, of

course). The Mandetis immediately pinned the blame on the Crinuites. In accordance with the Mandetis sect's religious laws, they declared war on the Crinuites who they perceived to be a threat to their religion. War broke out between the two factions.

The Imperials' plan of driving a wedge between the two factions had succeeded. They revealed themselves to the Crinuite high priests and provided them with arms for combating the Mandetis. All but a handful of Crinuites welcomed them as gods. There were a few that saw through the Imperials' scheme and guessed their true intentions. (That is, the Empire had no interest in the outcome of the civil war and all they wanted was to get the killing started and then mop up the rest.)

One of these skeptics was a Crinuite priest who managed to stow away on an Imperial shuttle bound for the Core Worlds. The shuttle was captured in route by the Rebels. After prolonged questioning, the priest was released. However, the Rebels had their hands full at the time and were unable to provide aid to the priest's homeworld. The priest turned to the fringe for help and found that the Wolfpack mercenary unit was willing to take the job. The Wolfpack exposed the Empire as the true threat, detonated the garrison, and with the help of the two factions united in arms (not to mention the acquisition of a cache of Imperial weaponry), decimated the Imperial presence on Oinarr. (As part of their fee for completing the mission, the mercs were allowed to establish a base of operations, the Wolf's Den, on an uninhabited island in the planet's southern hemisphere.)

Members:

What follows is a rundown of the ten members of the Wolfpack mercenary unit and their specializations. Only write-ups for the first five members appear in this article. Look for write-ups of the remaining five members in a future issue of the Online Journal.

Derren Tombs

Derren Tombs is twenty-six years old and is of medium height and medium build. Tombs has piercing gray-blue eyes and shortly cut blonde hair that's parted down the middle. A long scar runs vertically across his left eye and halfway down his cheek; courtesy of a hunter that once attempted to bring in his hide on Kabaira. Tombs is used to brawling with his bare fists and is just as comfortable with a vibroknuckler as he is with a blaster. When he's not swapping war stories with fellow mercs or engaged in a round of lumguzzling, he has a penchant for starting barroom brawls.

The son of miners on Kabaira, Tombs would have followed in his parents' footsteps had it not been for a mining accident that left them both dead. With no family to turn to, Tombs signed on to the standard five-year contract in the Imperial Army. Tombs completed his six months of basic training at the top of his class at the Imperial Military Academy on Carida (see *The Jedi Academy Sourcebook* by Paul Sudlow, pp. 108-110). His

Derren Tombs- D6

Type: Mercenary commander

DEXTERITY 3D+1

Blaster 7D, blaster: blaster rifle 8D, blaster: repeating blaster 7D+1, blaster artillery 4D, brawling parry 6D+2, dodge 6D+2, grenade 4D+1, melee combat 8D, melee combat: vibroknuckler 9D+1, melee parry 7D+1, running 6D+1, vehicle blasters 4D

KNOWLEDGE 3D

Bureaucracy: Imperial 3D+2, alien species 4D+2, business: mercenary 8D, cultures 4D+2, intimidation 5D, languages 4D+2, law enforcement: Imperial 5D+1, planetary systems 5D, planetary systems: Damuji 5D+2, planetary systems: Kabaira 7D, scholar: dire wolf training 6D, streetwise 5D+2, survival 6D, survival: desert 7D, tactics: ground assault 6D, tactics: squads 6D, value 4D, willpower 5D+2

MECHANICAL 2D+2

Astrogation 5D, beast riding: dewback 4D+1, communications 5D+1, repulsorlift operation 3D+2, sensors 5D+1, space transports 5D, space transports: Sentinel-class landing craft 6D+2, starship gunnery 5D, starship shields 5D+1

PERCEPTION 3D+1

Bargain 5D+1, command: Stang 7D, command: Wolfpack mercenaries 8D+2, con 4D+1, forgery 3D+2, gambling 4D, hide 4D, investigation 4D+2, persuasion 5D, search 4D+2, search: tracking 5D+1, sneak 4D+2

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 7D, climbing/jumping 4D+2, lifting 4D, stamina 6D, swimming 4D

TECHNICAL 2D+2

Armor repair 5D+1, blaster repair 4D+1, demolitions 3D+2, first aid 5D, space transports repair 4D+2, security 4D, starship weapon repair 3D+1

Force Points: 2

Character Points: 24

Move: 10

Equipment: BlasTech E-11 blaster rifle (5D), BlasTech T-21 light repeating blaster (6D), Czerka vibroknuckler (STR+1D)*, macrobinoculars (+1D to search greater than 50 meters), modified Imperial sandtrooper armor (+2D+2 physical, +2D energy, -1D to Dexterity and related skills)**, modified Sentinel-class landing craft Wolf Claw (see below).

training completed, Tombs was assigned to the Imperial garrison on the barren backwater of Damuji as a desert stormtrooper.

While sandtroopers are allowed a greater deal of autonomy than standard stormtroopers, Tombs had developed a habit of questioning his superior officer, Captain Bralin, far too often. Consequently, Tombs spent a good deal of his year in the Empire carrying out what the Imps mockingly referred to as “dewback duty,” a job normally carried out by Droids that involved

Derren Tombs- d20

Male Human Soldier 4/Scout 7/Officer 7;

Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); **Def** 14 (+11 class, +2 Dex, +1 dodge); **Spd** 10; **VP/WP** 162/17; **Atk** +17/+12/+7 melee (1d4+2/20, Unarmed) or **Atk** +17/+12/+7 melee (2d4+2/20, Czerka Vibro-Knuckler), or **Atk** +17/+12/+7 ranged (3d8/19-20, E-11 Blaster Rifle) or **Atk** +13/+13/+13/+8/+3 (3d8/19-20, Lt. Repeater on multifire & rapidshot) or **Atk** +11/+11/+11/+11/+6/+1 (3d8/19-20, Lt.Repeater on autofire & rapidshot); **SQ** Trailblazing, Heart +1, Uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to defense & can't be flanked), Skill Mastery Pilot, Extreme effort (2/day), Evasion, Leadership, Requisition supplies, Tactics, Uncanny Survival; **SV** Fort +14, Ref +11, Will +11; **SZ** M; **FP** 2, **DSP** 0; **Rep** +7; **Str** 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15.

Equipment: Blastech E-11 blaster rifle, Blastech T-21 light repeating blaster, Czerka vibro-knuckler*, macro-binoculars, modified imperial Sandtrooper armor**, modified sentinel-class landing craft Wolf Claw.

Skills: Appraise +3, Astrogation +7, Bluff +3, Computer Use +8, Climb +5, Demolition +3, Diplomacy +8, Forgery +2, Gambling +3, Hide +3, Intimidate +6, Jump +5, Knowledge +5 (alien species), Knowledge +5 (cultures), Knowledge +8 (Damuji), Knowledge +9 (Dire Wolf training), Knowledge +12 (Kabaira), Knowledge +7 (law), Knowledge +8 (streetwise), Knowledge +9 (tactics), Knowledge +6 (systems), Move silently +6, Pilot +12, Profession +2 (bureaucracy), Profession +15 (mercenary), Read/write basic, Repair +8, Ride +5, Search +4, Survival +11, Swim +3, Treat injury +7.

Feats: Armor proficiency (light, medium, powered), Dodge, Great fortitude, Heroic surge, Improved initiative, Point blank shot, Martial artist, Multi-shot, Rapid shot, Starship dodge, Starship operation (space transports), Track



the painstaking (not to mention smelly) process of shoveling manure from the dewback stalls. Although Tombs was clearly talented enough to be considered for a promotion, his tendency to question authority hindered his advancement. Tombs was despised by his superiors for this deficiency and among the troops, he became the laughing stock of the barracks.

Rebel activity on Damuji was becoming increasingly rampant following the Battle of Endor and the planet's Rebel cell was making Imperial control of the planet more expensive than it was worth. The Empire withdrew its forces from the planet at the orders of the Imperial governor. Rather than board the troop transport with the remainder of his unit, Tombs made his way to the landing platform where the Imperial governor's shuttle was preparing for liftoff. Shortly after hijacking the shuttle, Tombs met up with two members

* Czerka Vibroknuckler

Type: Melee weapon

Skill: Melee combat: vibroknuckler or brawling: vibroknuckler (at the gamemaster's discretion)

Cost: 300

Availability: 2, F, R

Difficulty: Very Easy

Damage: STR+1D (maximum: 6D)

Game Notes: A vibroknuckler has a very short blade making it difficult for an unarmed opponent to block. Unarmed opponents receive a -1D to brawling parry when defending against a vibroknuckler attack.

Capsule: The vibroknuckler is a small self-defense weapon intended for close quarter combat. The knuckler is designed for someone who is comfortable brawling with bare fists. Once it has been slipped over the fingers, the knuckler's cutting blade activates as soon as the wielder clenches his or her hand into a fist.

Source: The Essential Guide to Weapons and Technology by Bill Smith. Adapted for the roleplaying game with help from Deltaspunky and Sithspawn on the SW-RPG HoloNet Discussion Forums.

of the Rebel underground, Crix Galen and Trenel Jarb, who were posing as stormtroopers.

Tombs had realized that the Empire was fighting a losing battle with the Rebels. The Rebels had proved at Endor that they were more of a threat than the Empire cared to admit. Tombs knew that the Empire's days were numbered and he had no desire to wait around for its funeral. The Galactic Civil War was still far from over, however, and the conflict had created a huge market for mercenary units. Tombs deserted and went into business for himself as a soldier-for-hire. With his Imperial background and training, Tombs had little trouble finding work as a mercenary

and he served a brief stint with ThunderForce, a large mercenary army operating out of Ukio (see Hideouts

** Modified Imperial Stormtrooper Armor

Type: Modified military armor

Cost: Not available for sale (estimated value of 4,500 with all modifications)

Availability: Sandtrooper armor: 3, X; modified armor is unique

Game Effect:

Armor Protection: +2D+2 physical, +2D energy, -1D to Dexterity and related skills.

Long-Range Comlink: Tongue-activated helmet comlink, surface to orbit range.

Sealed Body Glove: Climate-controlled body glove and breath mask allows operation in toxic-air environments and extremely hot to moderately cold climates.

MFTAS: Multi-Frequency Targeting Acquisition System; adds +2D to Perception checks in low-visibility situations, +2D to ranged weapon skill uses against targets moving more than 10 meters per round; polarized lenses prevent flash-blinding.

Utility Belt: Contains 2 extra blaster

power packs, concentrated rations, datapad, glow rod, high tension wire, 3 ion flares, 2 medpacs, spare hand-held comlink, and water pack.

Capsule: Tombs' sandtrooper armor is nearly identical in appearance to that of standard Imperial issue with the exception of the color scheme which Tombs has changed from the typical white to a light gray. Tombs wears a black shoulder pauldron on his right shoulder with the emblem of the Del'thon tribe of Togoria on it and the left breastplate of his armor has the Wolfpack's signature insignia of a black stylized wolf's head. Tombs' armor has also been modified substantially, offering more protection in firefights and physical attacks than standard Imperial issue.

It's a wonder why Tombs still insists on wearing his "procured" sandtrooper armor. Tombs doesn't seem to be one

that would swim long in nostalgia; he certainly has no love for the Empire and if the Imperial bounty on his head is of any indication, his days of serving the Empire are long gone. A high profile in Tombs' line of work can be fatal especially on some of the backwaters Tombs and his mercenary outfit are known to frequent. In such places, stormtrooper armor is about as high profile as one can get. Stormtrooper armor seems to have a way of attracting unwanted attention from the wrong people and the armor has nearly cost Tombs his life on more than one occasion when bounty hunters and Imperial agents have been able to identify him by it.

Source: Stats adapted from Rules of Engagement: The Rebel SpecForce Handbook by Timothy S. O'Brien, pp. 100.



& Strongholds by Sterling Hershey, pp. 52-60), before starting his own mercenary outfit two years after the Battle of Endor.

Tombs was drawn to the mercenary life simply out of necessity as his Imperial training had left him with not much more than combat skills. Tombs masquerades as a true mercenary—often acting cold and uncaring—yet underneath his rough exterior is a man with little love for money or carnage. As a mercenary, Tombs knows that he is expendable and that he must watch out for himself. His loyalty cannot be bought and must be earned. Tombs never forgets a face and he can be your best friend or your worst adversary. Just keep this in mind if you ever decide to cross him or you're bound to end up on the wrong end of a blaster; if not his own than one belonging to a comrade.

Tombs believes that as long as there is a civil war, there will be the need for

mercenaries in the galaxy. Even with the Alliance's victory at Endor, Tombs knows that the civil war is not any closer to being brought to a standstill. While the civil war will continue, Tombs believes that the causes will come and go. As a mercenary without any set loyalties, he believes that he can continue to profit from the conflict without being drawn into a lasting relationship with either side.

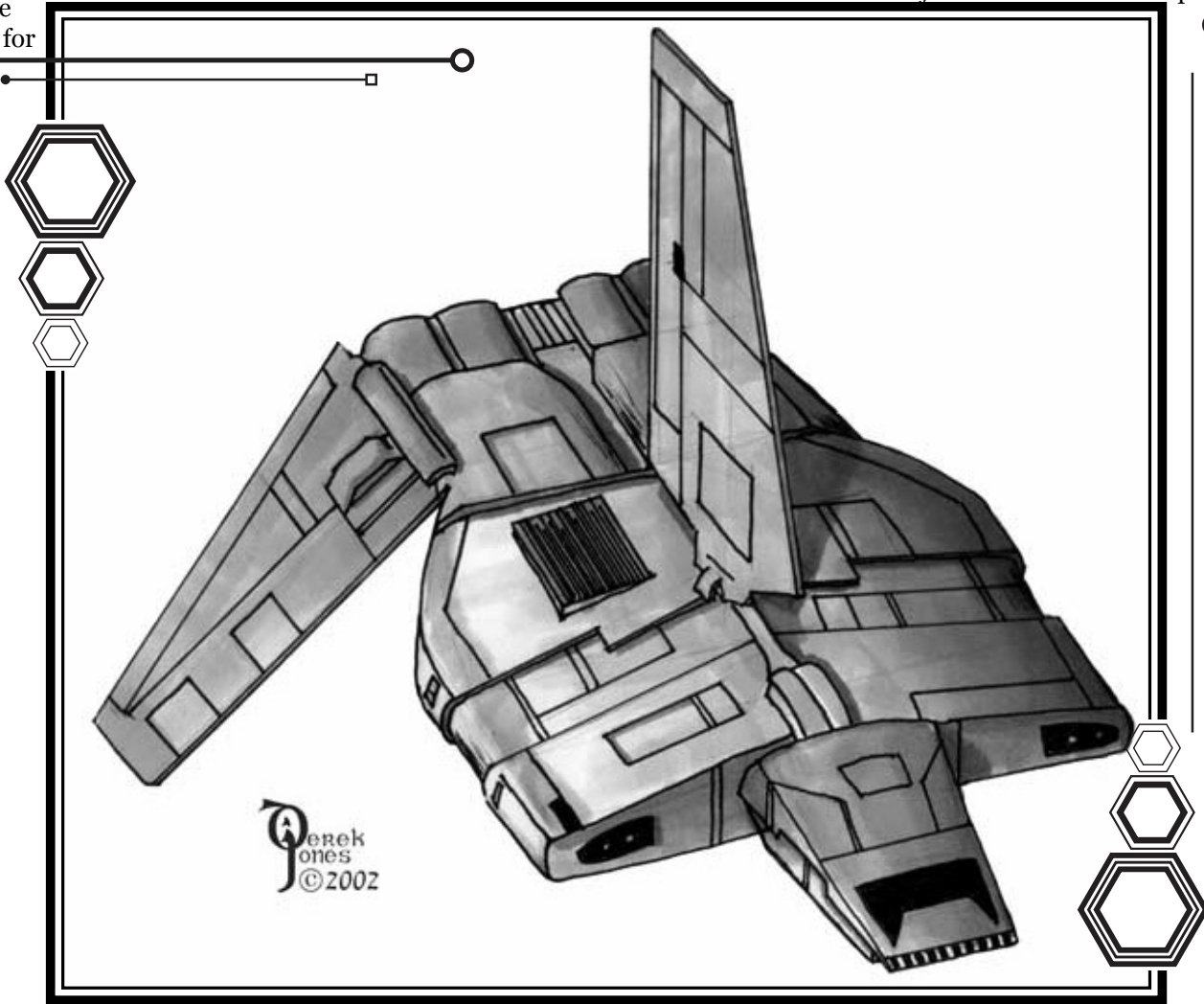
Well, ideally this is what Tombs would like to believe. As of late, Tombs has, in his words, "complicated" his life by allowing his emotions to interfere with his dealings with the Republic. Tombs knows that what the Republic stands for is good, he is just afraid of being conscripted into an abiding relationship. He would much rather do his part in eradicating the Imperial presence from the galaxy under his own terms and through his own methods than take orders from

some incompetent, chair-polishing Republic bureaucrat. Tombs, however, has realized that a death mark is not an easy thing to live with. Tombs knows that he can't run from the Empire forever and that the day will come when he'll have no choice but to join the ranks of the New Republic.

The Imperial death mark on Tombs' head currently stands at 60,000 credits. His crimes against the Empire include high treason, espionage, conspiracy, murder of Imperial personnel, and destruction and confiscation of Imperial property.

The Wolf Claw

The Wolf Claw was once the Desert Wind belonging to the Imperial governor of Damuji. The landing craft was hijacked by Derren Tombs with the help of Trenel Jarb and Crix Galen, two members of the Damuji resistance. Since "acquiring"



Wolf Claw - D6

Craft: Sienar Fleet Systems/Cygnus Spaceworks
Sentinel-class landing craft

Type: Modified landing craft

Scale: Starfighter

Length: 20 meters

Skill: Space transports: Sentinel-class landing craft

Crew: 2; gunners: 3; skeleton: 1/+10

Crew Skill: See Derren Tombs (pilot), Crix Galen (copilot/sensor officer), Trenel Jarb (head gunner), Tivguul (secondary gunner), Murrsk (secondary gunner)

Passengers: 20

Cargo Capacity: 50 metric tons

Consumables: 2 months

Cost: Not available for sale

Hyperdrive Multiplier: x1

Hyperdrive Backup: x8

Nav Computer: Yes

Maneuverability: 3D

Space: 7

Atmosphere: 350; 1,000 km/h

Hull: 5D+1

Shields: 4D

Sensors:

Passive: 20/0D

Scan: 40/1D

Search: 80/2D

Focus: 4/2D+2

Weapons:

2 Concussion Missile Launchers (fire-linked)

Fire Arc: Front

Crew: 1 (secondary gunner)

Skill: Starship gunnery

Fire Control: 3D

Space Range: 1/3/7

Atmosphere Range: 50-100 m/300 m/700 m

Damage: 9D

2 Double Laser Cannons (retractable, fire-linked)

Fire Arc: Front

Crew: 1 (head gunner)

Skill: Starship gunnery

Fire Control: 3D

Space Range: 1-3/12/25

Atmosphere Range: 100-300 m/1.2 km/2.5 km

Damage: 6D

1 Ion Cannon (retractable)

Fire Arc: Turret

Crew: 1 (secondary gunner)

Skill: Starship gunnery

Space Range: 1-3/7/36

Atmosphere Range: 100-300 m/700 m/3.6 km

Damage: 4D

2 Rotating Repeating Blasters (fire-linked)

Fire Arc: Turret

Scale: Speeder

Crew: 1 (secondary gunner)

Skill: Vehicle blasters

Fire Control: 4D

Atmosphere Range: 1-50 m/100 m/250 m

Damage: 3D+2

Fire Control: 3D

Space Range: 1/3/7

Atmosphere Range: 50-100 m/300 m/700 m

Damage: 9D

2 Double Laser Cannons (retractable, fire-linked)

Fire Arc: Front

Crew: 1 (head gunner)

Skill: Starship gunnery

Fire Control: 3D

Space Range: 1-3/12/25

Atmosphere Range: 100-300 m/1.2 km/2.5 km

Damage: 6D

1 Ion Cannon (retractable)

Fire Arc: Turret

Crew: 1 (secondary gunner)

Skill: Starship gunnery

Space Range: 1-3/7/36

Atmosphere Range: 100-300 m/700 m/3.6 km

Damage: 4D

2 Rotating Repeating Blasters (fire-linked)

Fire Arc: Turret

Scale: Speeder

Crew: 1 (secondary gunner)

Skill: Vehicle blasters

Fire Control: 4D

Atmosphere Range: 1-50 m/100 m/250 m

Damage: 3D+2

the landing craft, Tombs has obtained new transponder codes and had the Wolfpack insignia therma-painted on both sides of the outer hull, both sides of the stationary top wing, and on both sides of each of the two folding wings. The insignias can be covered with ease should the mercenaries know ahead of time that they will be traveling through Imperial space. That way the Wolf Claw takes on the appearance of a standard Imperial landing craft (with the help of an alias transponder code, of course).

The landing craft had been modified heavily by the Imperial governor to be used as his own private transport, namely the addition of heavier armor plating and faster sublight and hyperdrive engines. Tombs made some modifications of his own by removing most of the seating in the troop compartment in order to house communication, sensor, and other electronic equipment as the Wolf Claw is used as a command center during missions. It is from the Wolf Claw that the Verpine intelligence specialist, Lafne, assists the mercs in the field by keeping them updated on enemy activity within the mission area.

The Wolf Claw also houses an extensive armory: lockers filled with all the latest Imperial-issue weapons and armor. The lockers contain four complete sets of

Wolf Claw - d20

Craft: Sienar Fleet Systems' Sentinel-class Landing Craft; **Class:** Space transport; **Cost:** Not Available for Sale (estimated construction cost 225.00 kCr); **Size:** Small (20m length); **Initiative:** +1 (+1 size); **Crew:** 5 (Unique); **Passengers:** 20; **Cargo Capacity:** 50 metric tons; **Consumables:** 2 Months; **Hyperdrive:** x1 (backup x8); **Maximum Speed:** Attack (Average, 7 squares/action); **Atmospheric Speed:** 1000 km/h (17 squares/action); **Maneuvers:** +1 (+1 size); **Defense:** 21 (+1 size, +10 armor); **Hull Points:** 160 (DR 10); **Shield Points:** 120 (DR 10).

Weapon: Concussion Missile Launcher (2 fire-linked); **Fire Arc:** Front; **Attack Bonus:** +1 (+1 size); **Damage:** 9d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB +0, S/M/L N/A.

Weapon: Retractable Double Laser Cannon (2 fire-linked); **Fire Arc:** Front; **Attack Bonus:** +1 or -3/-3 (+1 size); **Damage:** 6d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB +0, S -2, M/L N/A.

Weapon: Ion Cannon; **Fire Arc:** Any; **Attack Bonus:** +5 (+1 size, +4 fire control); **Damage:** 4d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB +0, S -2, M/L N/A.

Weapon: Repeating Blaster Cannon (2 fire-linked); **Fire Arc:** Any; **Attack Bonus:** +1 or -3/-3 (+1 size); **Damage:** 4d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB +0, S -2, M/L N/A.

Imperial stormtrooper armor and an Imperial officer's uniform as well as several Imperial-issue blaster rifles, blaster pistols, and light repeating blasters. These are used on missions involving the infiltration of Imperial installations.

Source: Stats adapted from West End Games' Star Wars Special Edition Trilogy Sourcebook, pp. 134.

Ruhne Marcum

Ruhne Marcum is a rugged, grim-faced forty-six year old mercenary hailing from Socorro (see The Black Sands of Socorro by Patricia A. Jackson). Marcum is a large, intimidating man with dark skin and black hair. Ruhne, in traditional Socorran fashion, wears a gold hoop in his left ear. He often wears a blood-red cloth bandanna on his head. Marcum also wears a small leather pouch around his neck that once belonged to his father who had obtained it from an Ibhaan'I shaman at Uhl Doaba'I on Socorro. Among some other trinkets, the pouch contains a pinch of blessed black Socorran sand, two fangs once belonging to a mutriok, and the rattle of a Socorran tailring.

Ruhne's mother died when he was very young and his upbringing fell upon his father, Helmeb Marcum, who taught him the ropes of the

mercenary profession. Ruhne's father was the founder of the Socorran Shadows, an elite mercenary infiltration unit that served the Old Republic during the Clone Wars. Like the Jedi Knights, the Socorran Shadows were systematically hunted down to the man and annihilated by agents of the Emperor's New Order.

Ruhne never speaks of his father as Socorrans consider it taboo to speak of the deceased. Ruhne, however, has not forgotten all that his father fought for and at the age of nineteen, Ruhne reestablished the Socorran Shadows, picking up where his father left off. It is uncertain what has prompted Ruhne and his father before him to devote their entire lives to the mercenary profession, when most Socorrans settle for smuggling or piracy. Because the Socorran Shadows only accept anti-Imperial contracts, their profession likely stems from the Socorran tendency of assisting the underdog, in this case all those oppressed under the tyrannical yoke of the Empire.

Ruhne has a deep respect for his homeworld and its people. Ruhne has many contacts on Socorro. Although not a member himself, Ruhne has ties with the Society of the Black Bha'lir. The connection the Marcums have with the Society is uncertain. Many speculate that the Society was once a mercenary unit with ties to the government of the Old Republic. The Society's connection with the Marcums seems to indicate some truth to this, but any details regarding this are well hidden.

Ruhne Marcum is fueled by a burning hatred for the Empire and all it stands for. His job won't be complete



Ruhne Marcum- D6

Type: Mercenary field commander
DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 8D, blaster artillery 6D, blaster artillery: anti-infantry 7D+1, blaster artillery: anti-vehicle 6D+2, brawling parry 5D+2, dodge 6D+2, grenade 5D+2, melee combat 6D, melee parry 5D, vehicle blasters 6D+1

KNOWLEDGE 3D+1

Alien species 5D, bureaucracy 4D, business: mercenary 10D+2, cultures 5D, intimidation 6D+2, languages 6D, languages: Old Corellian 7D, languages: Socorran 8D+1, planetary systems 6D, planetary systems: Socorro 8D, scholar: military history 10D+1, streetwise 7D, streetwise: Socorro 9D, survival 7D, tactics: infiltration 11D, tactics: squads 10D+2, value 5D+1, willpower 6D

MECHANICAL 2D+2

Astrogation 4D+2, beast riding 3D+1, communications 4D+1, repulsorlift operation 4D, sensors 4D, space transports 5D, space transports: Mu-1 shuttle 6D, starship gunnery 4D, starship shields 4D+2

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 6D, command: Socorran Shadows mercenary infiltrators 9D+2, command: Stang 3D+2, command: Wolfpack mercenaries 7D, con 4D+2, hide 5D+2, investigation 5D, persuasion 5D+1, search 5D+2, sneak 6D+2

STRENGTH 3D+2

Brawling 6D, climbing/jumping 5D, lifting 5D, stamina 6D+2

TECHNICAL 2D+2

Computer programming/repair 3D+1, blaster repair 4D, demolition 4D+1, first aid 5D, security 6D, space transports repair 4D, starship weapon repair 3D+2

This character is Force-sensitive.

Force Points: 4

Character Points: 42

Move: 10

Equipment: Caelli-Merced

Sentinel IV heavy blaster pistol (5D+2), datapad, flak jacket (+1D physical, +1 energy to torso), headset comlink, medpac, modified Mu-1 long range shuttle Cloak & Dagger (see below), spare hand-held comlink, three extra blaster power packs, vibroblade (STR+3D).

until all traces of the Empire have been erased from the galaxy. Despite Ruhne's sympathetic attitude toward the New Republic, Ruhne has stopped short of actually joining them as Marcum would much rather operate under his own terms. Although the New Republic bureaucrats don't condone Ruhne's military practices, they're glad he's on their side.

Marcum is a cunning tactician and an able field commander that is greatly respected by those under his command. Marcum is also a very honorable warrior who remains true to his word. The veteran of countless battles, Marcum has been a mercenary for the past twenty-seven years. Marcum never served time with the Empire, yet somehow has a comprehensive understanding of the strategies and tactics employed by the various branches of the Imperial military. Some claim that Marcum has a better understanding of the Empire's tactics than the Imperials themselves. Such knowledge puts him and his mercenary outfit at a great advantage when pitted against some of the Empire's finest.

The Socorran Shadows were one of the dozen mercenary outfits hired by the planetary government on Pludef VI, four years after the Battle of Endor. The government was looking for mercenaries to fill the ranks of its army in order to oust a psychotic Imperial Moff who had set up a garrison in hopes of establishing an Imperial foothold on the planet. While the other mercenary groups dealt with the garrison's trooper contingent on the battlefield, the Socorran Shadows were hired to infiltrate the garrison and take out the Imperial Moff and his crack stormtrooper protectorate. As the Socorran Shadow infiltrator team

penetrated the garrison's perimeter defenses, the Imperial Moff, senile if not insane, accepted the inevitability of defeat and took his own life by detonating the garrison. The resulting explosion took most of the Socorran Shadow mercenary infiltrators with him; the sole survivors being Ruhne Marcum, the Verpine field technician, Lasfne, the Defel, Rafir'a'ell, and the Barabel gunner, Kartel.

The Wolfpack had been hired to participate in the battle against the garrison's ground forces and Derren Tombs and his two Togorian bodyguards pulled the mercs from the burning inferno that was once the garrison. The days of the Socorran Shadows were finally over

Ruhne Marcum- d20

Adult Male Human Soldier 4/Noble 1/Officer 1; Init +2 (+2 Dex); **Def** 17 (+2 Dex, +5 Class); **Spd** 10m; **VP/WP** 55/15; **Atk** +6 ranged (by weapon), +7 melee (1d3+3, punch); **SQ** Favor +1, Leadership; **SV** Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +7; **SZ** M; **FP** 4; **Rep** +3; **Str** 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 15, **Int** 14, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 14.

Equipment: Caelli-Merced Sentinel IV heavy blaster pistol, datapad, flak jacket, headset comlink, medpac, modified Mu-1 long range shuttle Cloak & Dagger (see below), spare hand-held comlink, three extra blaster power packs, vibroblade.

Skills: Appraise +4, Astrogate +4, Computer Use +7, Diplomacy +9, Disable Device +5, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Alien species) +6, Knowledge (Military History) +10, Knowledge (Military Tactics) +11, Profession (Mercenary) +8, Read/Write Basic, Ride +4, Speak Basic, Speak Old Galactic Standard, Treat Injury +5

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Expertise, Dodge, Force-Sensitive, Iron Will, Weapons Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, starship weapons, vibro weapons)

and the survivors went on to join the Wolfpack at Tombs' invitation.

Ruhne has yet to forgive himself for what happened that day on Pludef VI. His fellow mercs had put their lives in his hands and he failed them. Needless to say, Ruhne's hatred for the Empire has grown tenfold since that assignment. Since the Battle of Pludef VI, Marcum and Tombs have become fast friends. Marcum currently serves as one of the two field commanders for the Wolfpack and has come to be one of Tombs' most trusted associates.

The Cloak & Dagger

The *Cloak & Dagger* is an old, beat-up Mu-1 long range shuttle that Ruhne bought from a Socorran scout that had known his father. The scout was going into retirement and had returned to his homeworld of Socorro to live out the rest of his days. Despite its outer appearance, the *Cloak & Dagger* is an extremely durable craft that has gotten Ruhne and his mercenary outfit out of many scrapes.

Source: Stats adapted from Galaxy Guide 8: Scouts by Bill Olmesdahl and Bill Smith, pp. 37.

Kelee Bulok

Once in the employ of Delgas Medical on Kabaira, Bulok was instrumental in providing the Rebellion with greatly needed medical supplies via Kabaira's underground resistance movement. When the Empire discovered her involvement, a squad of Imperial stormtroopers was sent to kill her husband and daughter while she was off-planet at a medical conference, which was in fact a meeting with Rebel operatives. When she returned, she found her family gone and her home razed to the ground. She lost everything that day and would have lost her life as well, if it hadn't been for the help of

Cloak & Dagger - D6

Craft: Sienar Fleet Systems Mu-1 shuttle
Type: Modified long range shuttle
Scale: Starfighter
Length: 20 meters
Skill: Space transports: Mu-1 shuttle
Crew: 2; skeleton: 1/+5
Crew Skill: See Lasfne and Ruhne Marcum
Passengers: 24
Cargo Capacity: 100 metric tons
Consumables: 3 months
Hyperdrive Multiplier: x2
Hyperdrive Backup: x16
Nav Computer: Yes
Maneuverability: 1D+1
Space: 6
Atmosphere: 330; 950 km/h
Hull: 3D+1
Shields: 2D
Sensors:
Passive: 25/1D
Scan: 50/2D
Search: 60/2D
Focus: 3/3D
Weapons:
2 Laser Cannons (fire-linked)
Fire Arc: Front
Crew: 1 (pilot)
Skill: Starship gunnery
Fire Control: 2D
Space Range: 1-2/12/25
Atmosphere Range: 100-200 m/1.2 km/2.5 km
Damage: 4D+2

Cloak & Dagger - d20

Craft: Sienar Fleet Systems' Mu-1 Shuttle;
Class: Space transport; **Cost:** Not Available for Sale (estimated construction cost 120,000 Credits);
Size: Small (20m length); **Initiative:** +1 (+1 size);
Crew: 2 (Unique); **Passengers:** 24; **Cargo Capacity:** 100 Metric tons; **Consumables:** 3 Months;
Hyperdrive: x2 (backup x16); **Maximum Speed:** Attack (Average, 6 squares/action); **Atmospheric Speed:** 950 km/h (16 squares/action); **Maneuvers:** +1 (+1 size); **Defense:** 21 (+1 size, +10 armor);
Hull Points: 100 (DR 10); **Shield Points:** 60 (DR 10).

Weapon: Laser Cannon (2 fire-linked); **Fire Arc:** Front; **Attack Bonus:** +5 (+1 size, +4 fire control); **Damage:** 4d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB +0, S -2, M/L N/A.



her Rebel friends.

No longer safe on Kabaira, the Rebels smuggled her off-planet and she began working directly for the Alliance as a medic onboard a hospital frigate. Derren Tombs knew Bulok as a youth growing up on Kabaira and when

Kelee Bulok - D6

Type: Mercenary combat medic

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 5D, brawling parry 3D+2, dodge 4D, melee combat 4D+2, melee parry 4D, running 4D+1

KNOWLEDGE 3D+2

Alien species 6D+2, cultures 5D, languages 5D, planetary systems 4D, survival 4D+2

MECHANICAL 3D

Communications 4D, repulsorlift operation 4D+1, sensors 4D

PERCEPTION 2D+1

Command: Stang 5D, hide 4D, search 4D, sneak 4D+2

STRENGTH 2D

Brawling 4D, climbing/jumping 4D, stamina 5D

TECHNICAL 4D

Computer programming/repair 6D, Droid programming 5D, first aid 7D, (A) medicine 4D+2

Force Points: 3

Character Points: 15

Move: 10

Equipment: BlasTech DL-18 blaster pistol (4D), blast helmet (+1D physical, +1 energy to head), blast vest (+1D physical, +1 energy to torso), datapad, knife (STR+1D), headset comlink, 10 medpacs, medical field kit, medicines (antidotes for local or combat poisons and toxins, stimshots, coagulants, immupills, and pain killers), spare hand-held comlink.

he started up a mercenary unit specializing in anti-Imperial missions, he asked Bulok to join as a combat medic. The Alliance wasn't doing enough in Bulok's eyes and she agreed to Tombs' offer, anxious to avenge her family's death as she saw fit.

Kelee Bulok is of medium height and has a slim, athletic build. She has short brown hair and blue eyes. Bulok doesn't have much in the way of combat experience, but remains a valuable asset to the Wolfpack nonetheless due to her extensive medical background. When circumstances allow, Bulok is full of humor and very spirited. When she is in the hot zone, however, she is all business. In the field, it's her duty to patch up her fellow mercs if needed and keep them stabilized long enough to get them out alive—a job she doesn't take lightly.

Kartel

Kartel is a tough, brash, battle hardened Barabel that is extremely loyal to Ruhne Marcum, as the two have been fighting side by side for years. Kartel's specialty lies in

Kelee Bulok - d20

Female Human Tech Specialist 5/Soldier

2; Init +2 (Dex); **Defense** 17 (+5 class, +2 Dex); **Spd** 10m; **VP/WP** 39/11; **Atk** +7/+2 melee (1d4, knife) or +9/+4 ranged (3d6 or DC 15 stun, BlasTech DL-18 blaster pistol); **SQ** Research, Instant Mastery (Disable Device +4), Tech Specialty (Medical Specialist: Treat Injury +1), Expert (Profession: physician); **SV** Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2, **SZ** M; **FP** 3; **DSP** 0; **Rep** +2; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 13

Equipment: BlasTech DL-18 blaster pistol, knife, blast helmet and vest, datapad, headset comlink, medical kit, 5 medpacs, surgery kit, spare handheld comlink

Skills: Computer Use +11, Disable Device +4, Hide +6, Knowledge (alien species) +8, Knowledge (cultures) +4, Knowledge (planetary systems) +1, Move Silently +6, Pilot +4, Profession (physician) +6, Repair +8, Search +5, Spot +4, Survival +3, Treat Injury +13

Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Gearhead, Skill Empasis (Treat Injury), Stealthy, Surgery, Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, simple weapons)

demolitions and heavy weapons and there is nothing he loves more than seeing the whites of the opposition's eyes when they see him advancing with guns blazing.

Kartel and three other Barabel were originally slaves of the Empire that were rescued by the Socorran Shadows when they liberated an Imperial forced labor camp out on the Outer Rim. Kartel and the other Barabel joined the Socorran Shadows as gunners at Ruhne Marcum's request. Because the mercenary outfit specialized in infiltration missions, Kartel and the three other Barabel

Kartel - d20

Kartel: Adult Male Barabel, Soldier 3; **Init** +2 (+2 Dex); **Def** 19 (+2 Dex, +4 Class, +3 Species); **Spd** 10m; **VP/WP** 31/17; **Atk** +5 ranged (by weapon), +6 melee (1d3+3, punch); **SQ** Claws, Darkvision, Feroocious attack, Primitive, Radiation resistance, Tail; **SV** Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; **SZ** M; **FP:** 0; **Rep:** +1; **Str** 17, **Dex** 15, **Con** 17, **Int** 11, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 10.

Equipment: Backpack power generator, bandolier with extra blaster power packs, 3 concussion grenades

Skills: Demolitions +6, Intimidate +10, Read/Write Barabel, Read/Write Basic, Repair +2, Speak Barabel, Speak Basic, Survival +2

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Dodge, Iron Will, Weapons Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, primitive weapons, simple weapons, vehicle weapons, vibro weapons)

gunners rarely saw much action. The Barabel gunners were extremely efficient, however, serving as the mercenary unit's "contingency plan" should an infiltration operation go wrong. The gunners would go in with guns blazing in order to get the infiltrators out alive.

While the Socorran Shadows infiltrated the garrison on Pludef VI, the Barabel gunners fought side by side with other mercenary units in engaging the garrison's ground forces on the battlefield. Kartel was the sole Barabel survivor of the battle. When Marcum joined the Wolfpack mercenary insurgency group, Kartel accompanied him.

Murrrsk

Murrrsk is a member of the Del'thon tribe on Togoria, a tribe renowned for producing some of Togoria's best trackers and hunters. Murrrsk, accompanied by a fellow tribesman by the name of Tivguul, left Togoria in order to search for their lost mates. While males rarely leave their homeworld, except in such an instance now faced by Murrrsk and Tivguul, female Togorians are prone to wanderlust and often take traveling tours of the galaxy. By the time Murrrsk and Tivguul began their search, their mates had already been gone for over a year.

Tombs came to the aid of the two Togorians when they were caught in the middle of a Karazak slave raid on Andasala (see Galaxy Guide 11: Criminal Organizations by Rick D. Stuart, pp. 72-75). Although the two Togorians were putting up quite a fight and had already killed half a dozen slavers by the time Tombs showed up, one of the slavers had drawn a bead on the Togorians with a snare gun. Murrrsk and Tivguul would have most certainly been incarcerated had it not been for Tombs' interjection. Murrrsk and Tivguul, grateful for their rescue, feel that they are honor-bound to serve Tombs until their debt is repaid. While Togorians are naturally suspicious of outsiders, the two realized that, despite his habit of

Kartel - D6

Type: Mercenary demolitions and heavy weapons specialist

DEXTERITY 4D

Blaster 6D+2, blaster: repeating blaster 9D, blaster artillery 6D+2, blaster artillery: anti-infantry 8D+2, blaster artillery: anti-vehicle 7D+1, brawling parry 5D, dodge 7D, grenade 6D+1, melee combat 6D, melee parry 5D+2, missile weapons 6D+2, running 4D+2, vehicle blasters 6D

KNOWLEDGE 1D+2

Intimidation 8D, languages 3D+2, streetwise 6D+2, survival 7D, tactics: ground assault 6D, willpower 7D+2

MECHANICAL 2D+1

Beast riding 3D, repulsorlift operation 3D+1, starship gunnery 4D

PERCEPTION 2D+2

Command: Stang 3D, hide 3D+2, search 4D+1, sneak 4D

STRENGTH 5D

Brawling 5D+2, climbing/jumping 6D, lifting 8D, stamina 7D+2

TECHNICAL 2D+1

Blaster repair 4D+2, demolitions 8D+1, first aid 3D+1

Special Abilities:

Natural Body Armor: Scales act

as armor, providing a +2D bonus against physical attacks and a +1D bonus against energy attacks.

Radiation Resistance: Natural resistance to most forms of radiation, providing a +2D bonus when defending against the effects of radiation.

Vision: Can see infrared radiation, giving Kartel the ability to see in complete darkness, provided there are heat differentials in the environment.

Force Points: 1

Dark Side Points: 2

Character Points: 8

Move: 10

Equipment: Backpack power generator, bandolier with extra blaster power packs, 3 concussion grenades (5D/4D/3D/2D), 2 EMP grenades, 3 fragmentation grenades (5D/4D/3D/2D), headset comlink, macrobinoculars (+1D to search greater than 50 meters), medpac, modified BlasTech DL-44 heavy blaster pistol (5D+1), modified Prax Arms Model AXM-50 "Blast and Smash" energy rifle (5D+2 blaster rifle, 4D/3D/2D grenade launcher), serrated vibroknife (STR+1D+2), SoroSuub RB-407 medium repeating blaster (7D).

wearing stormtrooper armor, Tombs could be trusted and that he had no love for the Empire. Tombs has agreed to do his best in helping the Togorians find their missing mates, but in the meantime, the two have been hired as Tombs' personal bodyguards as well as pathfinders for Tombs' mercenary unit, the Wolfpack.

Murrrsk is a tall, slender Togorian with matted, solid black fur. Murrrsk is a fierce warrior and has seen a fair share of battle. Murrrsk wears an eye patch over his missing left eye, courtesy of an encounter with a liphon, a flying reptile indigenous to Togoria. Claw marks, blaster



burns, and other scars criss-cross Murrsk's body where fur no longer grows. Being the excellent hunter that he is, Murrsk wears many trophies including a snow-wolf teeth necklace. While Murrsk has no problem understanding Basic, he is unable to speak it and Tivguul often acts as his translator. Unlike most Togorian males, Murrsk wholeheartedly embraces everything that the galaxy has to offer and is especially fond of his heavy blaster pistol.

On a hunting expedition into the mountains surrounding Eponte Spaceport on Kabaira, Murrsk found the dire wolf that Tombs would later train. At the time, the canine was a mere pup and had been orphaned by Kabairan game hunters who had killed the mother and driven off the remainder of the pack.

Murrsk - d20

Male Togorian Scout 4/Soldier 3; Init +3 (+3 Dex); **Def** 17 (+3 Dex, +5 Class, -1 Size); **Spd** 14m; **VP/WP** 54/15; **Atk** +8/+3 melee (1d4+3, punch), +8/+3 melee (1d8+3, bite), +8/+3 melee (1d8+3, claw), +8/+3 melee (1d10+3, sc'rath), +8/+3 or +4/+4/-1 ranged (3d8, heavy blaster pistol), +8/+3 ranged (1d4+3, throwing knife) +8/+3 ranged (4d6+1, frag grenade); **SQ** Bite, Claws, Heart +1, Trailblazing, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to Defense); **SV** Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +4; **SZ** L; **FP**: 1; **Rep**: +2; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 6.

Equipment: Bandolier with spare blaster power packs, BlasTech DL-44 heavy blaster pistol, 3 fragmentation grenades, headset comlink, 2 throwing knives, spare hand-held comlink, Togorian sc'rath with back sheath.

Skills: Computer Use +3, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (dire wolves) +4, Listen +2, Move Silently +8, Read/Write Togorian, Repair +4, Ride +7, Speak Basic, Speak Togorian, Survival +5

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Emphasis (Handle Animal), Stealthy, Track, Weapons Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, simple weapons, vibro weapons)

Murrsk - D6

Type: Mercenary pathfinder and bodyguard

DEXTERITY 5D

Blaster 5D+2, blaster: heavy blaster pistol 6D+2, brawling parry 6D, dodge 6D+2, grenade 5D+1, melee combat 5D+2, melee combat: sc'rath 7D, melee parry 5D+2, running 6D, thrown weapons 5D+2, vehicle blasters 5D

KNOWLEDGE 1D+1

Intimidation 7D, languages 3D, scholar: dire wolf training 3D, survival 5D+1, survival: forest 6D, survival: grassland 6D+2, willpower 5D+2

MECHANICAL 2D

Beast riding: mosgoth 6D+1, communications 3D, sensors 2D+2, starship gunnery 5D

PERCEPTION 2D+2

Command: Stang 6D, hide 3D+2, search 6D, search: tracking 7D, sneak 6D+2

STRENGTH 5D

Brawling 6D+1, climbing/jumping 6D+2, lifting 6D, stamina 7D

TECHNICAL 2D

Blaster repair 3D, first aid 3D+2, melee weapon repair 5D, starship weapon repair 3D

Special Abilities:

Claws: STR+1D damage when brawling.

Teeth: STR+2D damage when brawling.

Stealth: Members of the Del'thon tribe receive a +2D bonus to search and sneak skills when used in forests, grasslands, and at night.

Vision: Togorians have excellent night vision and receive no penalties at night.

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 12

Move: 15

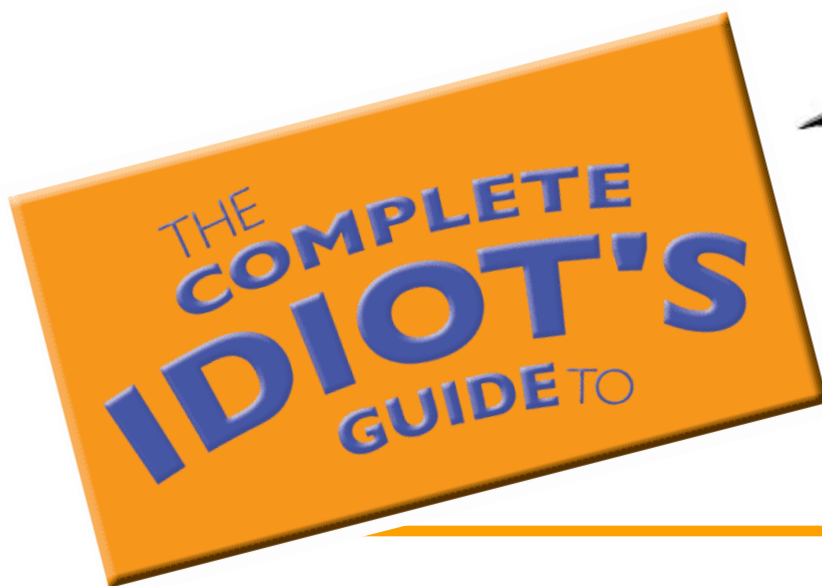
Equipment: Bandolier with spare blaster power packs, BlasTech DL-44 heavy blaster pistol (5D), 3 fragmentation grenades (5D/4D/3D/2D), headset comlink, 2 throwing knives (STR+1D), spare hand-held comlink, Togorian sc'rath (STR+3D)* with back sheath.

* Togorian Del'thon Tribe Sc'rath

Cost: 8,500 black market, **Damage:** 1d10, **Critical:** 19-20, **Range Increment:** -

Weight: 4.8 kg, **Stun Damage/Fort DC:** -, **Type:** Slashing, **Size:** Medium, **Group:** Simple

Source: D6 Stats and capsule found in Galladinium's Fantastic Technology by Rick D. Stuart, pp. 70.



GenCon

The Idiot's Guide to GenCon

Rodney Thompson

Author's Note: This article was written as a day-by-day journal of events at the GenCon game fair. As such, the narrative style is a little more rambling and chronological than a general summary, so bear that in mind while reading.

Day 1: The Day of Travel

An entire day is used up to travel. It begins on the road, then takes to the air, and back on the road once more. Having never flown before, it was a unique experience, but a good one. The hotel room is nice and quiet (despite being less than a mile from the airport), but there are, of course, a few minor problems. The chief one being that despite having laptops, PDAs, and all other manner of computer equipment, we cannot access the internet without using the pay-per-minute service that is, of course, highway robbery. The weather has been nice, with cool breezes and nice, clear skies. Milwaukee, land of a thousand lakes (and possibly a thousand beers; more research will be done on this topic in a few days), has proven to be very flat, but pleasant.

Meeting Armage Bedar for the first time hasn't been as awkward as I thought it could be. Having worked together for the last 2+ years has given us a kind of unique friendship so that meeting face to face for the first time is just like seeing someone I haven't seen in a couple of years. Now, we await the arrival of our third team member, GMSarli, and his troupe of gamers and GenCon-goers.

Darth Xavien won't shut up or stop moving. Regretting bringing siblings already.

Day 2: The First Day

After a healthy night of rest and a brief meeting with the rest of our group, the actual convention begins. Our first GenCon experience involves dealing with the absolutely atrocious parking and construction situation downtown. This is probably going to turn out to be the worst part of the trip; parking not only costs an arm and a leg, it's near impossible to find any and even then the parking garage is a ghetto affair lacking in any sort of post-1970's technology. The convention center, however, couldn't be nicer. Incredibly new and clean architecture, nice open spaces, plenty of room to move around, and rather decent organization greet us at the entrance to the convention. The Midwest Express Center (known as MECCA around these parts) seems to be relatively new and very nice, and earns points for the convention right off the bat.

Arriving in the main portion of the GenCon area, we are overwhelmed by its size. There are just massive numbers of people, vendors, books, and merchandise all over the convention center. The Exhibit Hall is massive;

it almost has to be seen to be believed. The Wizards of the Coast castle dominates the convention floor, and has everything under the sun. Power of the Jedi is the first to be claimed by my greedy little hands, as well as a few other odds and ends that need to be added to my collection. Wandering around the Exhibit Hall is too big to really be seen in one day, but a lot of familiar faces and names greeted us on our arrival. The first "famous" person we met was Owen K.C. Stephens, author of such books as *Starships of the Galaxy* and *Tempest Feud*. After briefly chatting with him, the first internet community member to greet us was Klecser, though he was not the last.

Wandering around the hall we saw Scott Kurtz of PvP, John Kovalic of Dork Tower, and a couple of other online comic artists. Though we didn't get to step in and say hello, it was cool to know they were there. The people at the Paizo Publishing booth were there, as well, and were very good about answering questions about the recent change of ownership of the WotC periodicals department. A nicer group of people we couldn't ask for. My greatest disappointment thus far, however, is the fact that the convention center doesn't have wireless Internet access. There are LAN ports spread throughout the facility, but there are no spare CAT5 cables around for me to hook the laptop into the network with. I may be forced to "procure" one tomorrow.

A break for lunch and \$150 worth of merchandise later, it was time for our first seminar. On a whim, we went to the d20 Modern seminar and were not disappointed. We were lucky enough to find Bill Slavicsek and Chris Perkins on the panel, as well as



MECCA viewed from the parking garage.

Anthony Valterra and a few other WotC and Paizo Publishing bigwigs. The seminar was VERY informative, and I was amazed at how much information they really gave out compared to other games before release. After about 45 minutes of basic presentation,

we were treated to a question and answer session on the game, which was incredibly cool. Not only did they address style and mechanical concerns, they also gave us some insight on why certain decisions were made (such as using HP instead of the VP/WP system) and also plenty of ideas on how adaptable the game is to other genres. This is definitely going to be a game to check out, with it's broad, branching classes and incredible versatility.

The best part about this seminar, though, was at the end when the seminar was over. After time ran out, I had enough time to meet and introduce myself to both Chris Perkins and Bill Slavicsek. It was strange, like meeting someone who is part celebrity but part co-worker. Both were very polite and tolerated our secondary questions well. Additionally, we learned that Bill had been kind enough to aid us by casting a vote in our favor for the ENnie Awards, which won't be held until tomorrow night. Very cool. It was great talking to both of them, if only

for a few moments, and we should get a chance to talk with them at greater length on Saturday after the Star Wars RPG seminar. After another seminar (Epic Levels, hosted by Ed Stark), it was time to head outside for the block party.

The block party was strange; at first, it was an unorganized free-for-all that soon transformed into a more casual place for the gamers to sit around and chat. There was some free food (pretzels, popcorn, chips and salsa, and other assorted cheap foods) not to mention the wonderful (and also free) beer donated by the kind people at Miller Brewing Company. I'm liking Milwaukee more and more already. After the snack-which-became-dinner, the celebrity boxing match began. Possibly a play on the Fox channel's most recent trash TV craze, three boxing matches featuring fighters from the various RPG and CCG companies gave the crowd quite a show. Though some scantily-clad con-going women of questionable virtue gave the male geek population something to gawk

at between rounds as they acted as the bearers of the round indicating signs, the fights themselves were all-out slugfests that were blow-for-blow more entertaining than the Tyson-Lewis fight some weeks past. Following the conclusion of the block party, we piled into the minivan and zoomed (well, not zoomed, thanks to awful construction and detour signs placed to intentionally mislead drivers) back to the hotel, and are calling it a night. Early morning tomorrow, with lots of seminars!

Industry People Met: Owen Stephens, Bill Slavicsek, Chris Perkins, Anthony Valterra, Ed Stark.

Community People Met: Klecser & Mike.

Loot: Power of the Jedi, Epic Level Handbook, E-Tools, Chessex purple dice, Chessex megamat battlemat

Day 3: Seminar-O-Rama

Upon arriving at the Midwest Express Convention Center, the first thing that happened was that we all went our separate ways. Darth Xavien sat in on a Gamemastering seminar (which I caught the tail end of) that seemed to be very informative; he came out very inspired and energetic about starting up his first game. I, on the other hand, had to be a little bit sneaky in order to get some internet access. On the first floor, they had a set of five computers set up so people could log into the internet and check their e-mail; this morning, it just so happened, someone had locked out the machines, and no one could log in. So, taking my trusty laptop and a little bit of ingenuity, I plugged into the network using one of the cables intended to plug into the now-defunct machines. Within about 15 minutes I had downloaded the software I needed to get on the internet from my hotel room (which was more difficult than it may sound) and unplugged. I hijacked their internet, and just barely got away with it. Reminder for next year: bring CAT5 cables to hook into the internet from the convention center.

Our first scheduled event of



Owen Stephens' Forbidden Kingdoms Game



Convention hall with Wizards' Castle.

the morning was a demo of a new game called "Forbidden Kingdoms" hosted by none other than Star Wars RPG author Owen K.C. Stephens. Forbidden Kingdoms can be described as a "pulp" roleplaying game; anyone familiar with movies like "The Shadow," "The Phantom," "Indiana Jones," "The Rocketeer," etc. is familiar with the genre. Essentially, the game recaptures the feel of the old-time radio dramas and puts characters in somewhat cliché but very fun situations. To give you an idea of just what the game was like, the climax of the adventure had the group of heroes onboard a zeppelin full of poison gas rescuing their twins/clones/fathers from the mad Dr. Phobos, who wields twin mind control guns after having used single-engine rocket packs to get up onto the flying machine. It was a lot of fun, and great to get into character and ham it up a bit. Owen was a great gamemaster, very good at getting into character, describing action, and making sure that everyone really got into the setting. I recommend picking up the book to anyone who has an interest in the pulp genre, as it is great for that setting and also makes an excellent one-shot game.

With a gap in our schedules, we all took some time to wander around the exhibit hall. Let me

take a moment to describe some of the cool things I saw there. Upon entering the hall, the tall visage of The Castle dominates the center of the room, which is where the Wizards of the Coast stuff was kept. However, directly in front of the door was the area designated for WizKids, the company that has made their fame off of the "click-base" miniatures games, like MageKnight, Battletech, and Marvel/DC HeroClix. The coolest thing about this area was the cool arenas they had for playing. For each game, they had some highly detailed and very cool terrain made out of styrofoam and other materials designed to look like something appropriate to the game's setting. For example, some of the MageKnight games took place on the ruins of some massive temple, with aqueducts flowing out one side and massive dragon's skull pouring blood from its mouth on the other, while gnarled trees and dying grass make up the terrain outside the temple. The Battletech games had a neat ruined city setting, with some collapsed buildings, demolished city streets, scorched earth, buildings with large gaps in them, and other cool objects for the mechs to move through and around. Another Battletech setting seemed to be an oil drilling/refinery yard, complete with

massive pumps, burning oil tankers, and lots of other sand and debris to give it a more southwestern flavor. The Marvel and DC HeroClix settings were among the best, though. The first one I came across was a massive construction yard, with a tall crane lowering girders down onto the incomplete skeleton of a building, while Superman slugged it out with Juggernaut next to a bulldozer. Another one of the neat things about these games was that WizKids were using their "large" figures as well; these were miniatures slightly larger than most action figures that represented huge characters; dragons for MageKnight, Sentinels (of X-Men fame) for HeroClix...the settings they had brought and the scenarios they had designed were really great, and I only wish I had the hefty sums of cash at my disposal to play such games (as a collectible miniatures games, you have to buy starter packs and booster packs much like a CCG).

Also in the exhibit hall were a plethora of costumed...people. Some of the costumes ranged from scandalous (for the women in chainmail bikinis and tavern maid outfits) to amazing (a guy dressed up as Legolas with braids and a bow). Some of the costumes were obviously just thrown together, but others were quite well done. I noticed several Jedi



(both male and female) with interesting variants on the Jedi outfits found in *Attack of the Clones*. Also, there was a shop selling replica and unique lightsabers (too rich for my blood, despite being of excellent quality) that made the Jedi costumes look that much more authentic.

One other really neat thing I saw in the exhibit hall was the plethora of authentic fantasy weapons. Some of the coolest swords, knives, and axes I've ever seen were on display there, and I came close to blowing a hefty chunk of change on a sword. Then I realized just how tough it was going to be to get a large fantasy sword past the security at the airport, and decided against it.

Once our break was finally over, we attended a wonderful seminar hosted by none other than famous Star Wars author Michael A. Stackpole. Mike is best known for his *X-Wing* series and his hardcover *I, Jedi*, though he is also an experienced gamer and worked writing roleplaying supplements before he became an actual author. The gist of his seminar is that since they became a part of geek culture, roleplaying games have been the target of lots of negative publicity and public outcry. The seminar was titled "War Against Gaming," and it was about exactly that: the way that some people have carried out a crusade against the gaming industry out of ignorance, fear, or simple closed-mindedness. The whole seminar was very informative; it began with a rundown of what caused the war to begin, including the various instances of games being linked to murder and suicides, as well as how the court cases dealt with games and how the negative publicity got started. The seminar then moved into the actual statistics of the war, including many statistics that people should know in order to combat the negative perception of roleplaying games. Finally, he wrapped up with some great ways that store owners and gamers themselves can help turn the negative sentiment into positive reinforcement, mostly through educating those who are wary of games as well as helping out in the community and showing

that gamers are upstanding citizens too.

The next seminar we attended was a very interesting one called "Freelancing for Wizards of the Coast." The title says it all. They gave some good tips on what WotC expects from freelancers, as well as how to break into the freelancing business. A large panel was on hand, including the three editors from Paizo Publishing, and generally it seemed to be very informative. The advice we heard the most was "write, and write often." Send submissions in to the magazines. Write for other companies. Do as much as you can to prove that you can consistently produce quality writing on a regular schedule so that when it comes time to look at bringing in a new freelancer they have many examples of your work. Other than that, they offered tips on formatting, a good idea of what editors look for when choosing individual works, and a lot of other tidbits on how to get into the industry. This seminar was very informative for those just starting out, though people who have some experience in this field may not find it as useful.

Finally, it was time for the event we'd been anticipating the entire first few days. The ENnie awards are a prestigious award ceremony that is hosted by the people at ENWorld, who have become the go-to source for any and all d20 news. As with last year, we were nominated for the "Best Fan Resource Website" award, and since we did not win last year, we were skeptical about our chances again. However, we were wrong. Despite being the only non-D&D site nominated for the award, we pulled out the victory! We got on stage, accepted the award, and then each of us gave a small speech. I was so excited I didn't pay much attention to Armage or GMSarli's speeches, but here is the basic transcript of mine: "I have to admit, we are really surprised and pleased to win this award. We didn't think that we had a chance, but looks like we were wrong. I think the people that deserve the most thanks for this award are the two guys here beside me, Grayson and Gary, for all their hard work and the support they give me. I'd also like to thank Daniel Falconer and Don Flores, our art staff, who couldn't make it tonight because, well, they're in another hemisphere. I'd like to thank all those who voted for us. And to those of you who are game designers and publishers, remember this face, because



On Stage at the ENnie Awards Ceremony



Eric Cagle running a Star Wars RPG demo while James Wyatt wonders why he's being photographed.

I'm next, I'm the next big thing, and I'm coming to write for you." The last part was, of course, mostly joking. However, there were lots of game publishers in the crowd. In fact, everyone who was nominated for something with the exception of a few websites was there, including almost every recognizable game designer in the business. It was great fun, and great to win.

After the ceremony, I had the good fortune to catch a late dinner with both Bill Slavicsek and Chris Perkins. We found a hotel restaurant called the Metro, where I had probably my best meal while in Milwaukee. We had some great conversations, and I really had a good time. It's always good to remember that these guys are just other gamers at heart; sure, they get paid for what they do, but they reminded me of the kinds of guys I might meet at my local gaming store...only, more famous.

Industry People Met: Jesse Decker, Erik Mona, Chris Thomasson, Thomas Reed, James Wyatt, Anthony Pryor, John Python, Wil Upchurch, Michael A. Stackpole, Ed Greenwood, Dave Arneson, Scott Kurtz.

Loot: Fortress Draconis, Platt's Starport Guide, Star Wars Planets Collection, Player's Guide to the Tapani Sector, Black Sands of Socorro, Operation: Elrood, Death Star Technical Companion, A Game of Thrones promotional poster and CCG mat.

Day 4: The Payoff Pitch

After not going to bed until very, very late and dealing with a sick GMSarli, we decided to sleep in this morning. As such, we didn't arrive at the convention hall until it was almost time for the Most Important Seminar, the "Future of the Star Wars RPG" seminar. Fortunately, once we did arrive, we were allowed to hook our recording equipment directly into the sound system and managed to record the entire thing! The seminar started off with a short presentation from Bill Slavicsek and Chris Perkins on some current and near-future product. While many of the details were not new, we did get to see a fair portion

of new artwork while there. Not only did we have all that to look at, we also learned a lot about the books, and were able to glean a fair bit of information about books in the near future, including the Arms and Equipment Guide and Coruscant and the Core Worlds. After the announced products were discussed, Bill and Chris went into a little detail on the future products that haven't been officially announced but are being worked on. One major relief for me was that they talked about the book that I wrote, and so I am now finally able to admit that yes, I did write a sourcebook for the Star Wars RPG. Additionally, we learned about books for gamemasters and books of adversaries and villains, both of which sound like they could be a lot of fun if done right.

During the midpoint of the seminar, Chris and Bill paused to allow some famous names in the Star Wars universe to come up on stage and field some general questions. Michael Stackpole, Troy Denning, R. A. Salvatore, and Pablo Hidalgo all came up and began fielding questions about the Star Wars universe. It was very informative, and was great to see a panel of writers all in one place.

The rest of the day was pretty much spend wandering around the exhibit hall and meeting the various people manning the booths. It was very cool to see so many names there that I recognized, and even to pick up a few business cards. If you are a freelance writer looking to break into the industry, GenCon attendance is a must. Being there and meeting people face-to-face did more for me than any amount of e-mails ever could, and being able to distribute a business card to anyone who sounded interested in having me do some freelancing for them was absolutely invaluable. Since making connections is a big part of doing freelance work in any industry, going to GenCon allows you to have everyone you want to make connections with all in the same place, and makes it just that much easier to get around, get your name out, and maybe find an "in" to get started on writing.



From Left to Right: Bill Slavicsek, Chris Perkins, Troy Denning, Michael A. Stackpole, R.A. Salvatore, and Pablo Hidalgo.

Just in a single day of collecting business cards and meeting people, I got in some serious time with people from Wizards of the Coast, Paizo Publishing, Green Ronin, Sword and Sorcery, Avalanche Press, Sovereign Press, Kenzer & Co., Fantasy Flight Games, and AEG. Pretty impressive for a single day of rubbing elbows and schmoozing, wouldn't you say?

That night we attended an event that has become an annual tradition at GenCon, the Ravenloft Play. As the introduction stated, in the beginning there were two negative stereotypes of gamers: the munchkins, that were all about stats and killing and hoarding treasure, and the thespians, who are roleplayers that use game time to show off their amateur acting skills to a captive audience and thrive on melodrama. The thespians found their niche at GenCon by putting on a play each year, and became known as the Ravenloft Players. This year's play was a recreation of the Buffy episode called "Once More, With Feeling." Despite some interruptions by the Call of Cthulhu auction next door (there's nothing quite like having a song-and-dance number interrupted by spooky chanting of "Ia Ia Cthulhu"), the play was actually pretty humorous and well done, and featured guest appearances by Stan! as well as Sean K. Reynolds.

After the play, we got a chance to sit down and do a nice little interview with Bill Slavicsek, who really has had a hand in so many recognizable roleplaying games over the years that it's easy to forget that he didn't write everything.

Time for bed. The final day of GenCon awaits.

Industry People Met: Brom, Stan!, John Kovalic, Sean K. Reynolds, Eric Cagle, Rich Wulf, Patrick Kapera, Rich Baker, Carl Gilchrist, Jamie Chambers, Noah Colman, Aaron Allston, Troy Denning, R. A. Salvatore, Pablo Hidalgo

Community People Met: Klecser and Mike, Draamal, Nar Cranor, Darth Jerrod, and others who seemed to know who I was but never told me their HoloNet (or other online) handle. So,

if you're not listed, it's because you didn't tell me your username!

Loot: Some free HeroClix miniatures

Day 5: Denouement

With the final day of GenCon upon us, we took some time to just wander around, see all the sights we hadn't yet seen, and pick up the last few things we needed before the convention ended. The real highlight of the day, however, was a pair of interviews we managed to pick up. The first was with Michael Stackpole, who impressed us all with his War Against Gaming seminar two days earlier. Mike was very kind, and spent a good while with us, answering questions, and giving us some funny anecdotes about his variety of experiences in the gaming world. Later, we caught up with Owen K. C. Stephens, who gave us another insightful (and humorous) interview in his hotel lobby. If you ever meet Owen, you must ask him to tell you the wallaby story and the Grand Moff Tarkin stories. Both will absolutely have you in stitches, and are well worth the time.

That night we managed to get some gaming in with Klecser, his buddy Mike, and their friend Phil. While it was a large group, we got through the first part of the adventure before giving in to our hunger and walking down the road to Denny's. Over dinner, and then later at the hotel, we had some great conversations about the Star Wars roleplaying game, and the way we each run our games. Not only did the group manage to convince me of the need for a new Tales of the Jedi era sourcebook, but I also had a great time swapping stories and philosophies with all of them. It was really great to spend some time with other members of the community, and we only wish everyone else we met had been able to join us. Next year, we must be more organized and all go out to dinner together and spend an evening gaming.

One of the most rewarding parts of the trip was meeting these guys and hearing what they had to say first hand, which isn't always as easy to do online.

After a great night, it was time for bed. The next day, we headed home, and thus our first trip to GenCon was ended.

Industry People Met: Chris Pramas, Aaron Loeb, Margaret Weis, Tracy Hickman, Warwick Davis.

Community People Met: Klecser, Mike, Phil, some guys from the Iron Claw RPG.

Loot: The Book of the Righteous, some MageKnight and MageKnight Dungeons miniatures to use in my upcoming D&D game.

Final Thoughts

GenCon was absolutely worth every dime I spent on it. In fact, I had my money's worth after the first day's seminars. Meeting the people there was the best part, and I WILL be there next year. I'm looking forward to the move to Indianapolis; more hotel space downtown means no more having to carpool and a little more freedom of movement than this year, where, because I wanted to hang out downtown one night, I had to blow \$30 on a cab ride back to my hotel. It was a little rough on the wallet, too, but this should be remedied next year. Also, when you go to GenCon and see something you want, buy it. Don't wait around, because lots of things sold out quickly.

I'll never forget this first GenCon, and anyone who even thinks they might want to go should start saving now and make it happen. I was blown away, and you should be too.



All the products Rodney bought at the convention

Cadences

Part 1

by Johnathon Stevens

"You're wonderful."

"Thank you. I've worked hard to become so."

- Inigo Montoya and Wesley, *The Princess Bride*

Reflections Past

28 BSW4

"This has not been one of my better days!" shouted a man as he dove away from a hurled explosive.

Rolling out of his dive with an easy grace that comes only from years of practice, the man stood, raising his lightsaber, the ancient weapon of the Jedi Knights, and assumed a defensive stance. Just in time too, as a dozen blaster bolts came screaming his way. With a series of fluid motions, the Jedi deflected the bolts away, and prepared for the next assault.

He wasn't disappointed, as his opponent, a female clad in form-fitting battle armor, threw another explosive. Probably hoping for the same effect as last time, the man thought to himself. Well, he had a different idea. Reaching out with the Force, he focused on the explosive. Suddenly, it stopped in mid-air for a moment, then went sailing back the way it came.

The armor-clad woman's face was concealed behind a scarf, but it wouldn't be hard to guess that she had a look of complete surprise on her face as her own grenade was flung back at her. She was able to react in enough time to avoid the worst of the explosion, but she still got knocked around pretty well. As she tried to stand, she saw the Jedi standing over her, his lightsaber pointed at her side, his posture indicating that he considered now to be a good time for her to yield. Glumly, she had to agree. The Jedi had bested her. With a sigh, she slowly stood, keeping her hands held high.

The two regarded each other for a moment before the man spoke.

"So when did you start working as an assassin-for-hire, Darkholme?"

"What do you want, Jedi?"

"I want to know who hired you to kill me," was his reply, though he never took his eyes off her for even a second.

"It was a shadow contract. I have no idea who in particular you've annoyed, Jedi," came the woman's retort.

The Jedi regarded her again. He had to admit that there was a dangerous sort of beauty about this bounty huntress known only as Darkholme. She was a little above average height, and her outfit, while skin-tight and showing a lot of curves, also carried a substantial amount of firepower, as he could attest, since recently a lot of it had been aimed at him. Her lower face was concealed, to prevent others from being able to identify her features, but her eyes were uncovered. One look into those liquid black eyes and a being knew that she was a dangerous person, in or out of her armor. She had the eyes of someone who was willing to kill regardless of reason, if the credits were right.

Of course, the Jedi had another reason for studying her eyes. Subtly reaching out again with the Force, he sensed the truth of her words. She didn't know who it was, though she had some unconfirmed suspicions. The contract she'd taken had stated that she was to kill the Jedi in exchange for a very large sum of money.

"I don't know either, but I think it might be best of you be more

discriminating with your future contracts." With that, he deactivated his lightsaber.

"I always fulfill my contracts Jedi, but just not today," spat Darkholme, before turning and walking back towards her speeder bike.

The Jedi reconsidered for a moment about just letting her go, but here in the Outer Rim, the Republic's laws didn't hold much sway. Besides, he had a mission that he needed to complete.

With a sigh, the Jedi turned to face the setting sun. It was certainly a beautiful sight. The sun's final rays played across the rocky terrain, their warmth easily felt.

For some reason, Darkholme turned to look at her quarry one final time. Even she had to admit that he was definitely handsome. His features had a youthful attractiveness to them, with chestnut brown hair framing his face. Judging from their battle, it was likely that he was in just as good a physical shape as she was, if not better. And his eyes. Green as a verdant field of grass, they held a curious depth to them.

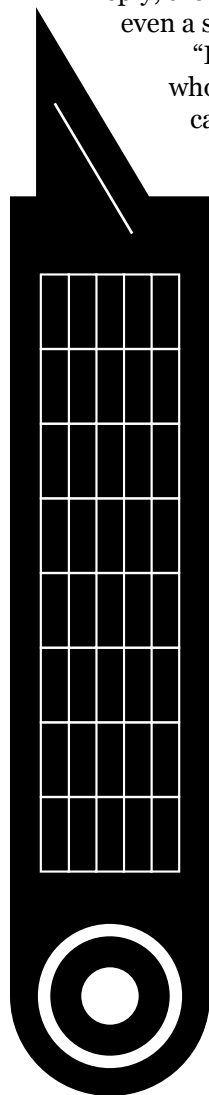
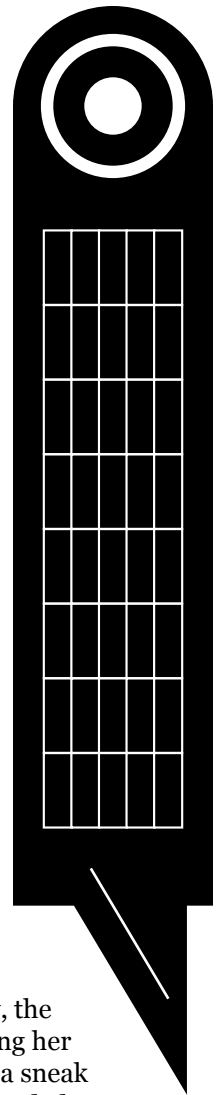
Best be careful. Emotional attachments only serve to get in the way, the bounty huntress chided herself, mounting her speeder bike. She thought about trying a sneak attack, but she already knew her body needed time to rest and heal. That grenade had taken more out of her than she would have every openly admitted. Maybe that was why the Jedi didn't finish her off.

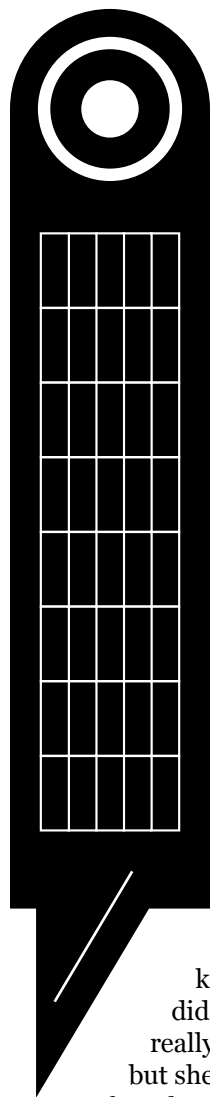
As the speeder's repulsor engine roared to life, Darkholme permitted herself some final words to the Jedi.

"Until next time, Donovan Morningfire."

Three Hours Later...

Donovan was finally glad this was over with. He'd been sent here by the Jedi Council to investigate rumors of a Force-using wizard. As it turned out, it was just a two-bit con artist with some high-tech gizmos that allowed him to mimic some known effects of Force use, such as moving objects with a thought or reading and affecting the minds of others. While he wasn't all that gifted when it came to technology, Donovan had to admit that the guy had a pretty good scam going. Of course, allowing the false wizard to continue to bilk the local people out of their hard-earned money was against the Code, in theory if not in writing. He also seemed very eager to leave for other parts of the galaxy when Donovan





suggested just how the villagers might react to learning they were being duped. The con artist had even tried to bribe Donovan to keep quiet, something that actually brought a grin to the Jedi's face; obviously he'd never heard of the Jedi's vows of poverty.

Of course, having Darkholme come blasting after him didn't exactly help matters either. At least Donovan was able to lead her away from the village so nobody got hurt during her attack.

Right now, about all Donovan wanted to do was get back to Coruscant and make his report. Besides, he had a Padawan to train.

At the thought of his Padawan, Donovan let out an audible groan. To this day, he still wasn't sure what possessed him to take that girl as his apprentice. Especially in light of all the grief she seemed determined to give him.

The girl in question was Sakura Gall'van, formerly the apprentice of Kleecko Volda, a Rodian Jedi that seemed to favor conflict as the solution to all problems, regardless of such behavior going almost directly against the Code. However, Kleecko had been killed just over a year ago. Donovan didn't have all the details, since he never really got along with Kleecko in the first place, but she had been shot multiple times, and died from her wounds. While the loss of a fellow Jedi

was always mourned, some felt that the Rodian had died before the Dark Side could claim her. However, that also meant that her Padawan was guilty by association. It was a standing ruling of the Council that a Padawan had one year to find a new master to continue their training, or they were shipped off to one of the Jedi Corps. And it seemed that Sakura had inherited Kleecko's unusual beliefs when it came to fighting. Most Jedi frowned on use of a blaster, but Kleecko apparently had encouraged use of the weapon in her apprentice, to the point that Sakura would often fight with her lightsaber in one hand and her blaster in the other.

And if her usage of a blaster wasn't a strike against her, then Sakura's personality certainly was. To call Sakura blunt was an understatement, much like saying a rampaging wookiee was 'mildly annoyed.' It seemed that she had no interest in any activity that didn't directly relate to training or combat. While Donovan wasn't exactly the party animal when he was her age, it was due more to shyness, though he still had fond memories of his party celebrating his becoming a Jedi Knight.

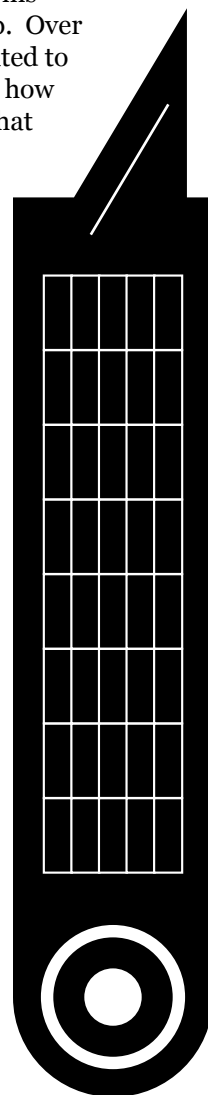
The thoughts of that party brought an sly smile to his face. It was something of an unspoken tradition that when a Padawan was bestowed the rank of Jedi Knight,

their peers got together to throw a little party as means of congratulations. The party was a way for the assembled Jedi to let their hair down, so to speak. What Donovan remembered mostly were the congratulatory kisses he'd received from just about every female Jedi that was in the Temple that night. He especially recalled three kisses in particular. The kiss from the Zeltron Jedi Varia Aran, delivered after a bit of dancing, was considered by many to be way beyond the limits of congratulations, or mere friendship for that matter. There was the kiss from a slightly older Jedi, Z'Rissa Organa. Z'Rissa had a reputation of being prim and proper at all times, and many were surprised to see her there. It was felt that her close friend and known prankster Dantris Solomani had dragged her there, and had somehow convinced her to partake in 'tradition.' Of course, every one was even more surprised when she actually kissed Donovan full on the lips, something nobody really expected her to do. The third was from Jedi Master Adi Gallia. While it had just been a tasteful peck on the cheek, it was still a peck on the cheek from one of the most adored Jedi Masters in recent memory, which was all that was needed to make it memorable.

But Sakura was another matter. Ultimately, Donovan decided, the reason he had taken her as his Padawan Learner was a sense of kinship. Over a decade ago, he had just about been slated to go to one of the Jedi Corps. He recalled how much he'd dreaded just the thought of that fate. And he could sense it from Sakura just as easily as a Gungan could swim.

So, with mixed feelings from the Council, Sakura became Donovan's apprentice. And things went downhill from there.

Sakura had a hard time accepting that someone who was only a few years older than her could tell her what to do. There was also their disagreement on usage of a blaster as opposed to a lightsaber. And then there was their philosophical differences on the Force. To Donovan, who had a very strong connection to the Force, especially the Living Force, it was as much a part of him as he was of it. But Sakura had been trained to see the Force as just a tool, a very dangerous notion indeed. It had taken weeks to explain to the girl that just being born with the ability to touch the Force wasn't simply a blessing, it was a responsibility. At least all Kleecko had taught Sakura on the Force was how to channel it within herself to enhance her physical prowess and heal her wounds. Worst of all, Sakura had taken the respectful term of 'master' and turned it into an insult. At one point, Sakura flat-out said that she



considered Donovan to be little more than a buffoon, and that it defied all logic that he not only had survived his apprenticeship, but had become a Jedi Knight. She made it perfectly clear that while she did not hate him, she didn't like him and had no respect for him whatsoever. Donovan's reply had left her speechless. Instead of pointing out her faults or belittling her, all he'd said only a few words after she ended her rant. "Where we are now is the perfect place to start."

Ultimately, it had taken a mock duel to earn some measure of her respect. Donovan knew enough about Rodian culture to be aware that only those beings that displayed true martial prowess were to be respected; and it seemed Sakura had picked that up as well. He made her a simple wager; she could bring whatever weapons she wanted, he would bring none. If she won, then Donovan would see to it that she was apprenticed to a 'more fitting' master. But if he won, then Sakura would do things as Donovan instructed. She laughed and accepted.

Predictably, Sakura entered the chamber with her lightsaber and her blaster pistol. Donovan, as per his agreement, was unarmed. She attacked quickly, drawing her blaster, but Donovan was able to quickly dodge her shots. There was no banter between the two, and

Donovan wasn't sure that Sakura had remembered to set her blaster to stun. After a few moments, he used the Force to pull Sakura's lightsaber from her hand, and as she tried to shoot him, reflected the bolt so that it grazed her gun hand, forcing her to drop the weapon. Holding her hand in pain, she admitted defeat, realizing that it took a great deal of skill to deflect a blaster bolt that precisely, leaving only a minor cosmetic scar instead of taking off her entire hand.

In the weeks that followed, Sakura proved to be a capable student. She even began to use the word 'master' less as an insult and more as a means of respect. She'd also learned that her own weapons could be turned against her, which was the main point Donovan had wanted to teach her in that mock duel. She also came to appreciate the Force less as a tool and more as an ally.

Perhaps there's hope for her yet, someone had said to Donovan once, in reference to the improvement in attitude that Sakura had shown. There's always hope for everyone, had been Donovan's reply, and though his tone had been a jestful one, he was quite serious. Others had hope for him even when he himself didn't, so why couldn't he have hope for another?

But those were thoughts for another time. His transport should be arriving soon, and then it was back

to Coruscant. But for now, he needed some rest. Darkholme was very, very good, and it had only been the Force that had allowed Donovan to survive her attacks. And he had a feeling he'd need all the rest he could get.

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Sparring with the Master

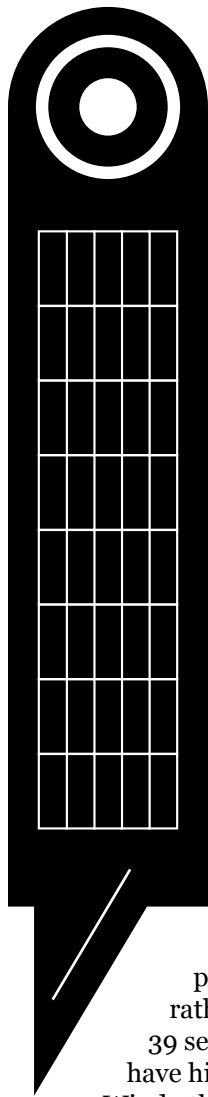
Three days later

Place: The Jedi Temple, Coruscant

Needing his rest was an understatement. Seems that Donovan had somehow gotten volunteered to help Master Windu with a demonstration of the various lightsaber combat styles for a large group of Padawans and Younglings. He had a sneaking suspicion a certain female of Padawan had something to do with all of this, but he could prove nothing. Not surprisingly, Sakura was one of the students in that class. Maybe she wanted to see just how good her master was against the man whom many, including Donovan himself, considered to be the master of the Jedi fighting arts, second only in ability to the diminutive Yoda.

So, with some measure of reluctance, Donovan was there. He recalled serving as an aide to one of Windu's classes a few years back. It had been just as physically demanding on the aides as it had been on the students. Besides, being a full-time instructor was something Donovan didn't want to consider as a future option. He felt that he best served the Will of the Force by being out in the galaxy, actively defending the ideals of the Republic as opposed to training the next generation of Jedi Knights. But, one does not turn down a request from a member of the Council, especially when said member is Mace Windu.

For the first hour or so, Windu lectured on fighting stances and styles, of the merits and flaws of each style, and how each person's individual style varied from one being to the next, with no two being exactly the same. While Windu spoke, Donovan took mental note of just how many students were here for this demonstration. Rough estimate put it somewhere near 60, mostly Younglings judging by age. He saw both Obi-Wan and his headstrong Padawan Anakin in the back. Going by rumor, Obi-Wan had managed to weasel out of being a part of this demonstration. Donovan wouldn't mind learning how, so that in the future he could do likewise if need be. He also saw Sakura near the front, paying rapt attention. Undoubtedly, if Sakura had won their duel, she



would have wanted Mace Windu as her new Master.

Then came the moment Donovan had been dreading all along. The part where Mace Windu and his assorted 'victims' were to show what the various styles looked like. Donovan glanced at the other Jedi present. He recognized a few, but didn't know the rest. Not surprising, considering how little time he'd actually spent at the Temple in the past few years. Z'Rissa wasn't here, due to her being assigned to help teach lightsaber techniques out at the Almas Academy in the Cularin system. She would have been a natural choice for this sort of thing.

"Now, the Jedi assembled here and myself will show you what the styles I've talked to you about actually look like in use," Windu said, waving his arm to indicate the dozen or so Jedi that were assembled to his left. Before the lecture, they had drawn lots to see what order they went in. Donovan considered himself fairly unlucky to have drawn the third lot. But, things were the way they were.

First up was a humanoid female who favored guile and craftiness, preferring to outwit her opponents rather than outfight them. It took all of 39 seconds for Windu to disarm her and have his lightsaber pointed at her heart.

Windu then addressed the class, pointing out what the precepts of the woman's style were, as well as the exploitable flaws. She had tried to bait the Jedi Master into attacking, so that he would be off-balance for her counter-attack. However, she wasn't prepared for Windu's own feint, nor for the aggressive speed with which Windu had followed that feint up.

Next up was a Trandoshan, who from the looks of him favored the brute force of Style IV over all else. It probably was a good thing that the lightsabers they were using weren't as deadly as the usual ones, since Donovan wasn't sure the Trandoshan was going to hold anything back. But Windu was just as easily able to defeat this opponent as he had been the prior one. As expected, the Trandoshan charged right in, looking to catch the Jedi Master by surprise and end the fight quickly. But Windu had simply sidestepped his opponent and swept his legs out from under him, while at the same time disarming his opponent with an almost casual flick of his wrist.

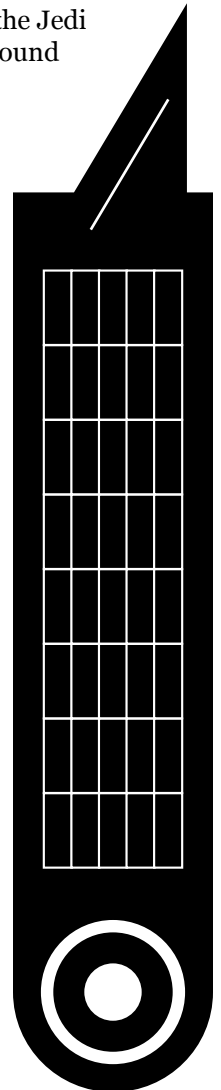
Then it was Donovan's turn. He could have sworn he actually saw Windu smile as they faced off. He'd hoped the others would have lasted longer, so that he could get a better idea of how Windu fought. But that hope had been quickly dashed. Donovan's followed the precepts of Style III more than anything else, as did a majority of the Jedi

nowadays. Being somewhat practical creatures, most Jedi found the anti-blaster techniques of Style III to be a valuable aid. While it was considered quite strong against ranged attackers, it was also considered a bit lacking when it came to dueling.

Donovan mentally ran through all the opening moves he knew, trying to decide which would work best. And quickly decided that none of them would. His best bet was to do something unexpected, and hope he could gain enough of an advantage to end the fight before it got going. With this in mind, Donovan dashed in, but just before Windu could strike, executed a somersault that caused the Master's blow to just miss the bottoms of Donovan's feet. The younger Jedi didn't even wait until he had fully landed before whipping his lightsaber around in an underhand attack, the speed of which immediately forced Windu into a defensive posture. The blow didn't land, but then Donovan wasn't expecting it to. He caught a glimpse of an opening, but passed, which was a good thing since Windu had tried to bait Donovan and finish the match. About the only edge Donovan had was his youth. But while Windu was older, he was also much more experienced and was a master of several styles of fighting, both with and without a lightsaber.

Donovan barely brought his lightsaber around in time to block a flurry of strikes from the Jedi Master's lightsaber. Quickly yielding ground to the advancing Windu, Donovan tried to come up with something before his back was to the wall, literally. Usually, Donovan used a series of flips and tumbles that put an opponent off-balance, forcing an opening. But Windu was too good; he blocked every attack Donovan could make with alarming ease. Having little else to try, Donovan executed a leaping spin, one that would whip his lightsaber quickly around his body, using the momentum to smash through the opponent's defenses. Unfortunately, all Donovan got for his trouble was a solid kick to his midsection about two-thirds through the spin, one that sent him sprawling to the floor. At least he was able to keep his hand on his lightsaber.

As he stood up, he took note of Windu's comments. Donovan's use of Style III brought out one of its best aspects: speed. Against an unprepared opponent, or one that relied too much on brute tactics, it was very formidable. But against styles that favored dueling tactics, it left a lot of openings, and a Style III fighter would quickly find themselves on the defensive, much as Donovan had found himself against Master Mace's barrage of attacks. His final attempt to attack would have



been quite deadly, if the opponent had no idea what to look for. But if you knew the signs, it would be fairly clearly telegraphed, and left a dangerous opening in one's defenses. Looking at a wall chrono, Donovan noted that his match had lasted just over a minute. Considering those that went before him, that wasn't bad at all.

And wasn't bad considering those that followed. It seemed the only Jedi that gave Windu any difficulty was a Style II adherent, who had likely studied the style due to the noted Jedi Master Dooku. Dooku had focused on it extensively, to the point he was considered the most adept master of Style II alive. During the matches, Donovan made mental notes. At some point, his lightsaber fighting skills would be put to the test against an opponent who really knew what they were doing. While Aerus was strong, his technique was savage and undisciplined, and thus not too difficult to defeat. But with the growing acknowledgment that the Sith may very well have returned, it grew more and more likely that the Jedi would find themselves facing foes who were just as skilled with the lightsaber as they themselves were.

Something that was not a welcome thought at all.

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Introductions

Three weeks later

Place: Almas Academy, Cularin System

He'd overheard Master Quatre talking about the Jedi Academy out in the Cularin system quite a few times, but Donovan had never been there until today. The Academy, much like the planet it was on, was something to be seen.

Almas would normally be a dead world, it's atmosphere totally poisonous to living things, were it not for the strange blue-green plant that grew all over the planet, and in fact was the only vegetation that could prosper in Almas' toxic soil. Sometime in the distant past, a Sith Lord had built a temple here, and used it as a base of operations. Thousands of years later, a Jedi student used whatever secrets were in that black temple to cause terror and suffering throughout the Cularin system, and to worlds beyond, before being stopped by a group of Jedi Knights.

The Academy had been founded to keep watch over the Sith Temple, to make sure that nobody else would gain access to it's dark secrets. The Sith Temple was strictly off-limits by order

of the Jedi Council.

For whatever reason, a small town had sprung up around the Almas Academy. Sakura thought it was wasteful and distracting to have something like this so close to a place where one learned the Jedi Arts, and said so. Donovan disagreed. He thought it added to the Academy, ensuring that those within didn't lose touch with those outside the Academy's walls.

He'd been sent here to speak with Headmaster Lanius Qel-Bertuk on direct orders of the Council. Not even Sakura knew exactly what they were doing here. What Donovan had to say was for Headmaster Lanius' ears only. Unfortunately, Lanius had chosen to go on an extended field-trip to Cularin proper with a large group of students, ostensibly to observe and consider the Force-using practices of the Tarasin. He was out of contact, and wouldn't be back to the Academy for several days.

And so it was that Donovan found himself wandering the halls of the Almas Academy, feeling bored out of his wits. He was far more of a doer than a thinker, with contemplation of events most often coming after the fact. He was barely paying heed when he heard a familiar voice.

"As I live and breathe, I do believe one of the Jedi Order's top celebrities has deigned to pay this backwater a visit."

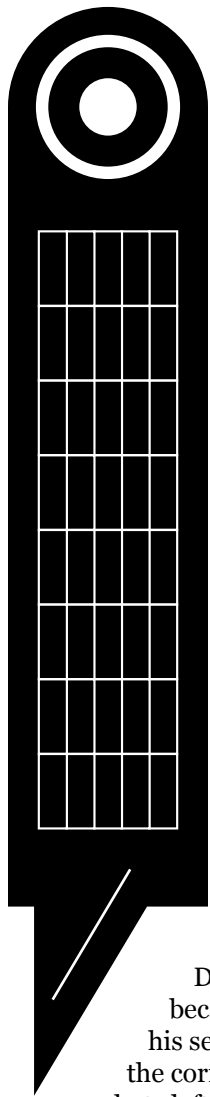
Donovan spun to see Dantris Solomani, a wide smile on his roguish features. Dantris could easily be considered handsome, and was a widely known flirt, having adopted a manner when dealing with females of any species that was as exaggerated as it was gallant. He was also known to have been quite the prankster during his days as a Padawan Learner, though now he was better known as a Healer of no small ability.

"Well I figured you bumpkins could use a little excitement out here," Donovan shot back, good-naturedly, trying to maintain a detached expression, which lasted for all of two seconds before his face erupted into a grin. Both men laughed.

"That's the first time I've ever heard a verbal comeback out of you, Donovan," Dantris said, shaking the younger Jedi's hand. "A few years ago I would have wondered if you had a sense of humor."

"First, that would require me to find something funny," Donovan said plainly, causing Dantris to hastily don a mock look as though he'd been gravely wounded by Donovan's retort. An action that again caused both men to laugh.

Dantris gestured back towards the Infirmary, which



he'd just stepped out of, indicating for Donovan to follow. "So seriously, what are you doing here Donovan? I figure you'd be out saving the galaxy, much like you did on Rinar."

Donovan inwardly winced. The events of Rinar had spread pretty quickly. It was even something of a good-natured joke amongst the Jedi.

About half a year ago on Rinar, the notorious pirate lord Jastor Fanor had finally been apprehended. And as far as the media was concerned, all the credit belonged to the dashing young Jedi Knight Donovan Morningfire. Nevermind that there were several others with him that were more instrumental than he was. Granted, about the only reason Donovan had even gone to Rinar to assault Fanor's hidden pirate base was to free Jasmine, an unwilling guest of the pirate. Darr went to collect the large bounty on the pirate's head, which he had, since no one else in the group claimed it. Alexis managed to slice the base's comp systems from the Fallen Angel, although the alarm was still raised when Fallon sneezed at the absolute worst time. Probably the only reason

Donovan got as much credit as he did was because all of the base's cams had recorded his seemingly unstoppable passage through the corridors, deflecting and redirecting blaster shots left and right, quickly dispatching anyone

that got in his way. Of course, when Donovan finally found Jasmine, she was being held at gunpoint by a desperate Fanor. It had taken some quick reactions for both to come out okay. Jasmine by stamping a stiletto heel on Fanor's foot, then ducking aside while Donovan blasted a wave of Force energy at Fanor, launching the pirate into a wall and knocking him out cold. Darr hadn't been far behind, and was ready to vape the pirate lord, were it not for Donovan telling him to back off while still holding his activated lightsaber.

Fortunately, the cameras had missed Jasmine's next action, that of almost tackling Donovan in a tight hug and kissing him full on the lips, all but choking him with her tongue. He later learned that Fanor had been introducing a series tailored pheromones into the air of her cell in an attempt to slowly bend the Twi'lek smuggler to his will. But she was tougher than he'd thought, and about all he'd succeeded in doing was making Jasmine very ... anxious. Some fresh air managed to cool her down, but the nearly-transparent black shimmersilk dress she'd been wearing when he came to her rescue did little to cool Donovan down. She'd teased that compared to some of the dresses she had back on her ship, her current attire could be considered modest. A statement that immediately caused

Donovan to turn bright red and the rest of them to laugh.

The Jedi were forbidden to have any sort of lasting attachments, such as family or marriage. Many thought the Jedi were forbidden to love, but as far as Donovan figured, that depended on your definition of love. Sheer lust and desire were definitely out, but compassion was encouraged. As were friendship and loyalty. And weren't those last two forms of love? Donovan held a very deep friendship with Jasmine. It had blossomed during their short stay on Nar Shaddaa, and deepened considerably over the past year. Were he not a Jedi, Donovan was sure that he would be much more intimate with Jasmine. But he had his Oaths to uphold. And such a commitment to the Jedi Order was not one that was easily broken. But ultimately, that was what made him so endearing to Jasmine. Most of her life had been spent around those that held no real code, those that let their base instincts drive their actions, not caring who got hurt in the process. Donovan was something of an ideal to her, a knight in shining armor. She'd also added several times, with a coy wink, that his looking like he could easily be the next Adarlon holofilm heartthrob didn't hurt either.

Suddenly, Donovan became aware of a piercing gaze upon him. Looking up, he saw Dantris leaning against the corridor wall, with a bemused smile, his eyes almost agleam with a mix of humor and mischief. Donovan had to fight every urge to wince at being caught day-dreaming, since that's pretty much what he'd just been doing. Dantris was known to have a gift for picking up the emotions of others, and from the look on his face, it was quite likely he'd gotten a good idea what was running through Donovan's mind for the past few minutes.

"You seem to have a lot on you mind. I'll let you get back to where ever it was you were heading," Dantris said, still grinning like a sabercat that had just devoured a pet glitterfish with no one the wiser.

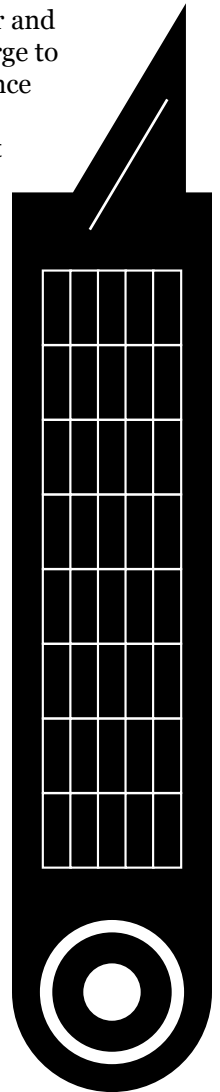
"Actually, could you tell me where the lightsaber training chambers are located? I've spent the past hour trying to find them," Donovan asked sheepishly.

Dantris just grinned again. "Sure thing. Just head down that corridor ..."

Later That Afternoon

And I thought Master Z'Rissa could be icy, Lon Blackstone thought glumly to himself. This girl wouldn't know a good time if it came right up and bit her on the nose.

The girl in question was Sakura, who had said all of thirteen words since she'd gotten here. Lon knew it was



thirteen because he'd counted them. After a short while, he wondered what transgression he'd committed to be forced to show this untalkative girl around the Academy. No, he corrected himself. Not untalkative. Downright anti-social was more like it. About the only thing she'd taken any interest in was where the training rooms were located. She'd been all but oblivious to some of his best jokes. If they had been normal teenagers and not Padawan Learners, it could be safely said that Lon was striking out big time.

He had first thought that maybe the two might have something in common, since he immediately noticed that Sakura wore a blaster on her right hip. While it wasn't strictly forbidden for a Jedi to use a blaster, it was heavily frowned upon. Lon himself only carried a pair of hold-out blasters, but preferred to keep them as a back-ups to his lightsaber and for undercover work, though he was learning how to use both at the same time.

He figured he might as well try to make the best of it, trying to think of some way to start up a conversation that she'd actually participate in. His several previous tries had been on fairly non-intrusive subjects, and had failed miserably. They were headed back to the dorms when he finally got an idea. At the very least, he would be likely to get an answer out of her, and maybe even bring her word count up to a full twenty.

"So ... what are you and your master doing here at Almas?" Lon asked as they came to the corridor where Sakura's room was.

She turned to face him, and Lon fought back the urge to laugh. Her face was completely somber, betraying no sign of emotion.

"I'm here to expand on my training," was her stoic reply.

"What about your Master? What's he doing here?" Lon asked, thinking that at least he'd gotten her up to twenty. Maybe he could hit thirty before the day was done.

"Training me," Sakura said flatly while walking to the door to her small room.

Lon was trying to think of something else to say when she opened her door, stepped through, and closed it.

"Not even so much as a 'good-night' or 'thanks for showing me around.' Nice to know how appreciated I am." Lon said aloud to no one in particular, before turning and heading back to his own room. Given his choice of unpleasant tasks that he'd had to do in the past every time he'd messed up and Z'Rissa caught him, Lon would have taken cleaning the entire Room of 1000 Fountains with a scrubber all by himself, again, over having to deal with

Sakura ever again. Of course, a part of him wondered just how Sakura would deal with a room that was done up in pinks and pastels, with all sorts of frilly lace and ruffles. If her personality, or seeming lack of it were any indication, she'd be less than thrilled. It was that thought that brought a sneaky smile to Lon's face. Being the unknown lord of pranks does have its perks, he thought to himself.

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Practice Makes Perfect

About an hour after getting directions from Dantris, Donovan finally found the lightsaber training chambers. Considering the length of time and the size of the Academy, Donovan got a feeling he had been given a somewhat more scenic route than he'd hoped for. No matter, at least now he had a better idea of where things were. Unfortunately, his room was not amongst them. But he'd deal with that later. Right now, he just wanted to go through some training exercises, and try a few new things he'd learned since his match with Mace Windu a few weeks ago.

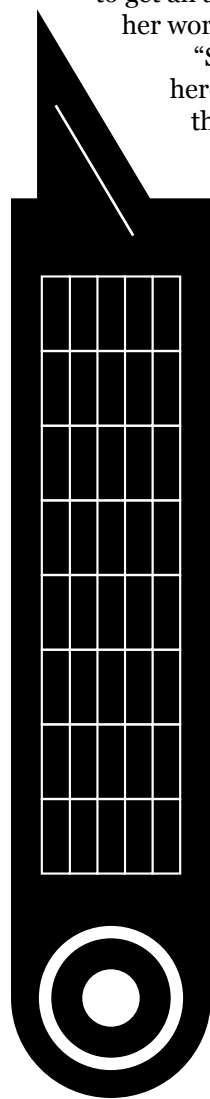
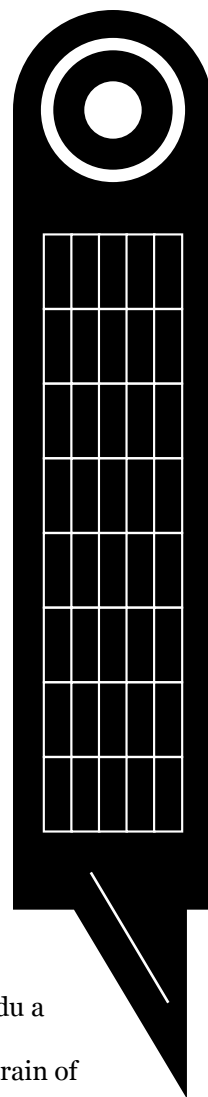
However, as the door opened, that train of thought went straight out the window.

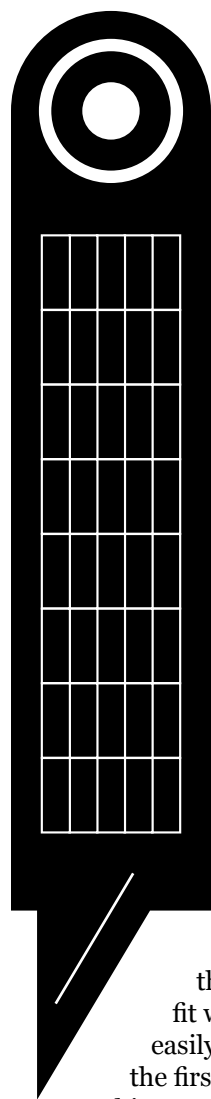
The room itself wasn't that big, but what caught Donovan's attention was it's sole occupant.

Performing a series of warm-up stretches, wearing an exercise leotard, had to be one of the most beautiful women he'd ever laid eyes on. Her back was to him, so he couldn't see her face, but what could be seen was remarkable, to say the least. Almost immediately, she stooped up and turned around. If he had thought she looked remarkable from the back, she was even more so from the front.

Her body was lean and athletic, the product of years of dedicated training and conditioning. But she still had a very feminine look, not bulging with muscle as some female athletes did. Her hair was done up in a simple braid, and was a vibrant red streaked with blonde, offsetting her pale skin beautifully. Her eyes were a sapphire blue, highlighted with very elaborate and intricate make-up. Her face was equally beautiful, and from her poise, she looked like she would be equally comfortable in the simple tunic of a Jedi or the rich gown of a noblewoman. It only took a few moments for him to attach a name to the figure before him. Z'Rissa Organa, assistant lightsaber instructor of the Almas Jedi Academy.

"Is there something I can help you with?" Z'Rissa





asked, her voice snapping Donovan back into the here and now.

I'm acting like I'm stuck in my early teens, Donovan chided himself.

"Um, actually I was hoping to use the ... ah, training chambers, but ... I can come back later," Donovan half stammered, not wanting to appear overly foolish in front of this vision of regal beauty that stood before him.

"That is quite alright. I would not mind a sparring partner, if it's not an inconvenience," she answered, then bowed her head. "I am Master Z'Rissa Organa. And, if I am not mistaken, you would be Donovan Morningfire?"

"That's me," he quickly said, keeping his words short to avoid tripping over them. While the last time he had seen her was a little over three years ago, Z'Rissa Organa was even more beautiful, though it may have simply been he was too shy and/or wrapped up in Jasmine to notice. Somewhere along the way she had gotten the moniker of Ice Princess, due in part to her royal surname, but mostly due to her reserved bearing, which to some bordered on arrogance.

As far as Donovan was now concerned, the only reason any part of the nickname fit was because Z'Rissa looked like she could easily have been a fairy tale princess. One of the first things that came into his mind after this assessment was what her face would look like when she smiled. It probably would be even more beautiful.

Z'Rissa nodded in acknowledgment. "Ah, the one who lasted the longest against Master Windu during his latest demonstration."

"Yeah," was all Donovan said, deciding that right now keeping his mouth shut would be the best way to avoid further embarrassing himself. His earlier thoughts of Jasmine had really put him off-kilter. He removed his outer shirt and utility belt, wearing only a tight tank-top. Without thinking much of it, he went through some basic stretching exercises. Oddly, he felt a bit embarrassed doing so in front of Z'Rissa.

He probed a bit with the Force, trying to get a slight sense of her emotions. While he wasn't as gifted as Dantris, Donovan was fairly adept at picking up the thoughts of others, especially due to some pointers he'd gotten of late from Jedi Master Yoda, who seemed to regard Donovan as something resembling a friend, for whatever reasons, and was always ready with a bit of sage advice. Though such advice was never just simply presented, it had to be deciphered, but once it was, the advice made perfect sense.

He didn't intend to be intrusive in the slightest,

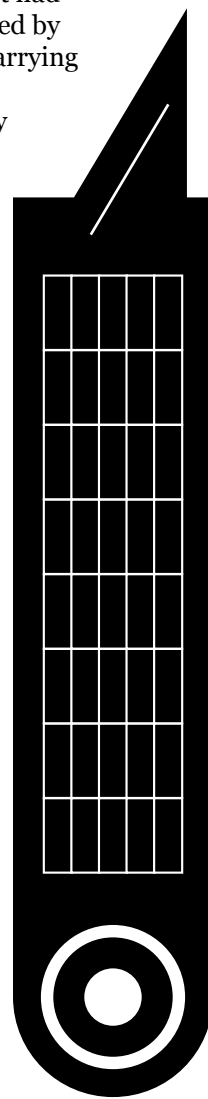
but what he read from Z'Rissa was more than a little surprising. There was a bit of embarrassment on her part, probably due to his having all but gawked at her a few moments prior, and something else, something Donovan couldn't exactly place. He could tell that she didn't mind the little show he was unintentionally giving her, and awareness of that made him blush slightly. He knew that he was in excellent shape, training his body constantly, and had heard more than enough comments from more than enough females to conclude that his efforts were definitely appreciated by that gender. But he never figured the Ice Princess would have the sort of feelings he was reading off her now. They just seemed so ... unbecoming. Of course the simple fact that he found her just as attractive, if not more so, wasn't helping matters any.

After his cheeks cooled, Donovan stood, lightsaber in hand and turned to face Z'Rissa. She also had her lightsaber in her left hand, and stood in a ready position, left arm extended in a single-handed grip as opposed to Donovan's double-handed stance. Both regarded the other with a trained eye. Each waited for some silent signal to begin.

Donovan was the first to move, snapping his lightsaber on and bringing it up before it had fully activated. Z'Rissa quickly responded by activating hers, the gold blade quickly parrying his blue one, though she used more of a side-step motion. She then immediately countered with a straight thrust that Donovan had to twist to avoid. It would be an interesting match. Donovan had speed and athleticism going for him, Z'rissa had technique and fluidity.

Donovan tried a clumsy feint, but Z'Rissa easily saw through it, and blocked Donovan's strike. She responded with a fast series of jabbing thrusts, though he was able to block those without too much difficulty.

After several minutes of back-and-forth, Donovan came to a conclusion that was both simple and elegant. To call her fighting style well-polished would be an insult. Immaculate would be a far better word for it. Z'rissa fought using a one-handed dueling stance, saber hand forward, thus presenting as small a profile to Donovan as she could, and wasted not a single bit of motion, the golden-hued blade of her lightsaber flashing about quickly yet precisely. Several times her off-hand had made gestures as though she were about to use the Force, but they had been feints, and only his athleticism had kept her strikes from piercing his defenses and landing a victorious blow. Every move she made



was technically sound.

Of course, not helping Donovan at all was her beauty. Her blonde-streaked fire-hued hair was damp with the sweat, her sapphire blue eyes focused almost entirely on this match. Pale skin was slightly flush from exertion. Her leotard, clinging more tightly from the sweat, was now even more complimentary to her figure. Twice during this sparring match Donovan's thoughts drifted slightly from the duel to admiring her figure when some of her stances had presented a curious view, and twice it had almost cost him.

Probably the only reason she hasn't figured out what I'm doing is because, at this point, I'm making it up as I go along, Donovan thought ruefully to himself as he spun away from a quick series of thrusts, responding with a pair of diagonal slashes that she easily sidestepped.

Z'Rissa went for a lunge to the right, and Donovan instinctively dodged left, only realizing at the last moment she had just baited him -- but not before she'd swung her blade in an easy arc that ended less than a centimeter under Donovan's chin.

"I believe I win?" Z'Rissa, a slight smile on her face, which even with the sweat was still as beautiful as when he'd first entered the chamber.

"I don't think that's open for debate," replied Donovan, grinning in spite of the fact that he'd just been beaten. And enjoying the fact that Z'Rissa's smile, slight as it was only made her that much more beautiful.

She stepped back, saluting Donovan with her with his lightsaber in the traditional manner. He did the same, and both deactivated their weapons, tossing them into their respective piles of clothes.

Grabbing a pair of towels, Donovan handed one to Z'Rissa, who was drinking from a bottle of water.

"I must admit Master Donovan, you are quite good," Z'rissa said, wiping away some of the sweat from her brow.

"You're as flawless as ever, Z'Rissa," Donovan returned, almost cursing himself immediately after he'd spoken. It had been meant as a compliment on her fighting style, but it could just as easily be considered a compliment on her looks. At least I'd be right on both counts, Donovan thought to himself.

"It's been quite some time since I worked up this much of a sweat. I could really use a shower," Z'Rissa said, snapping Donovan out of his little reverie.

"That's the best idea I've heard all day," Donovan quickly agreed, but then something else came to mind.

"What is it?" asked Z'Rissa, seeing

the distress on Donovan's features.

Donovan could only smile sheepishly. "Um ... I have no idea where the showers are. Or even where I'm staying for that matter."

A heartfelt smile played across Z'Rissa's face, lighting it up much like festival lanterns light up a night sky. "Your room would likely be in the Instructor's Hall, and by now Lon has likely finished helping the girl, whom I assume is your Padawan, get settled."

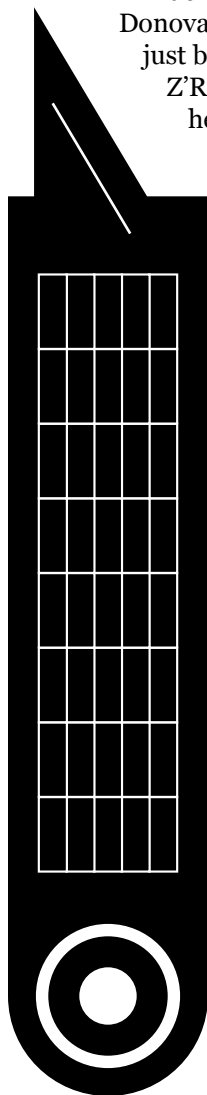
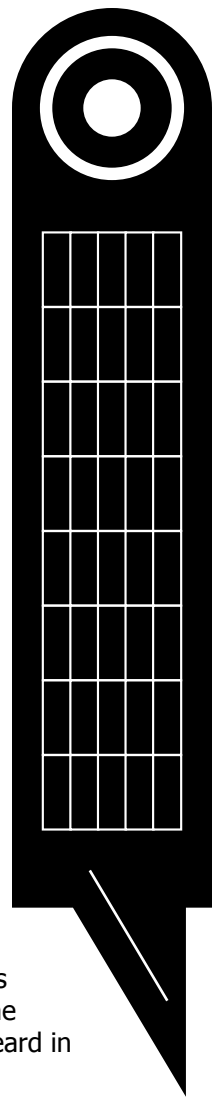
"Then after you, M'lady Knight," said Donovan, bowing while gesturing to the door. He looked up, a mirthful grin on his face. Even though he had no idea what inspired him to do what he just did.

"Very well then, Master Jedi," Z'Rissa answered, with a slight curtsy, a smile on her face as well.

As the two entered the Instructor's Hall, Z'Rissa turned to face Donovan. "I must admit, you are very graceful loser. I can easily think of several students and even a few Jedi who could do well to learn from your example."

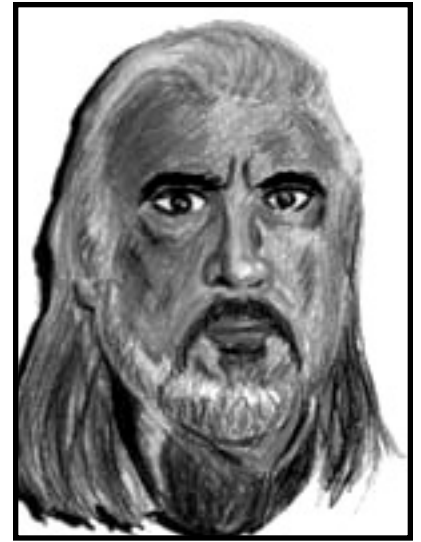
"It's pretty hard to not be humble when you've got a lightsaber pointed at your throat," Donovan quipped, and was rewarded with what had to be one of the most enchanting sounds he had ever heard in his life.

Z'Rissa began laughing.



ROGUES GALLERY





SMUGGLER'S LOG

EZEKIEL TANE

BY BEN FLOOD-PADDOCK

Smuggler's Log: Ezekiel Tane

The fifth moon of Sheldor IV was rising over the horizon as the manoeuvring jets of a heavily modified YT-2400 almost drowned out the howling wind blowing across the tundra. As the landing legs dug their grips into the icy packed soil, the main ramp descended from under the belly. After a minute or so, a figure came down the ramp. Wrapped in cloth robes, with Lekku flapping in the gale, he crossed the landing field, pausing only in the shelter provided by a large freighter. His eyes passed across its lines, it appeared to be another Correllian design, the HT-2200. At least, it used to be. Very little of the original hull showed passed the modifications and replaced armour panels, and there appeared to be an additional cockpit on the starboard side. He moved on, and entered the covered stairwell that led down to Gelligan's Inn.

Down the stairs, he brushed aside the heavy burgundy curtains, unclipped the cloth bandanna covering his mouth and nose, and inhaled the smell of tabac and the odours of the few patrons. A smile grew on his face, revealing his row of pointed teeth. He stepped down to the bar, where Gelligan, or at least whom he assumed was Gelligan, stood polishing an immaculate glass. He appeared to be human, though with the mane of tangled hair, his big beard, and eyebrows not so much bushy as Endory, he could have been a short Wookiee. A couple of seats down was an indistinct figure, wrapped in a blue cape, his thin fingers cradling a steaming cup of char. A couple of Rodians were playing sabacc in a cubicle, while a Tiss'harl glared over his glass of what looked distressingly like blood.

"It's cold out there," said the Twi-Lek as he sat at the bar.

"Cold? It's summer," grumbled the bartender.

"Hey yeah? Stang. Still, I've seen worse. You ever been to Hoth?"

"Nope."

"I went to see the memorial there. That's cold."

"You want a drink?"

"Lum. Gimme a pitcher, will ya?"

"As you like. What brings you here, stranger?"

The bartender carefully placed the large jug of lum on the counter. The Twi-Lek studied the perfectly clear glass for a second, then took a long swig. He carefully

returned it to its place on the bar.

"Worth waiting for," he murmured to himself. His eyes flicked up, and his smile returned, "I just got out from Korkamarr, hoping to pick up some supplies."

"Korkamarr? There's no transit at Korkamarr. General Page has it blockaded."

"Ha!" grunted the blue caped shape.

"Stow it Zeke," murmured the bartender. The Twi-Lek's eyes narrowed as he looked sideways, then his grin returned.

"Yeah, he's got a few MC220's out there, but I just sailed right by. Flight of O-Wings gave me a nasty turn, but there is nothing that'll get past my Frontiersman!" The blue caped figure started to shake mildly.

"Ha!" The Twi-Lek turned, his grin turning distinctly nasty.

"You got a problem, pal?"

"You're a blockade runner, eh? Ha! There's no such thing anymore."

"Oh yeah? You should have seen what they had there, and I went in, dropped off my cargo, and got out again. Sounds like blockade running to me!"

"Call that a blockade? That's nothing. Now, Palpatine, he really knew how to blockade. He made things interesting."

"What would you know old timer?" The blue clad figure sat up straighter, and his hood slipped back to reveal long white hair, a thin, angular face, one blue eye, and one glowing red cybereye. The Twi-Lek leaned back, startled.

"Zeke, Ezekiel? Ezekiel Tane? THE Ezekiel Tane?" he whispered in awe.

"The Ezekiel Tane? A long time ago maybe. Now it's Zeke."

"Zeke. Fine. I thought you were dead!"

"That's Zeke to my friends."

"Okaaay."

"And I'm not dead. Mothma and Skywalker saw to that."

"You know them?!"

"No, they just extended my life expectancy by taking away everything that was fun. Sit with me for a while, and let me tell you a few stories."

History

Ezekiel Tane was born on Corulag, during the last years of the Old Republic. His father was Raym Tane, was a lecturer in Galactic Economics at the University. Raym was a kind man, firm but fair to both his students and his only son. His mother, Shail, was a refugee from one of the small human settlements on Caamas. Shail never really recovered from that debacle, and she died when Ezekiel was only three, leaving Raym to care for him. After two years, Palpatine took control of the Senate. Raym saw the intrinsic danger, and left for Coruscant to try and convince others. He never returned. In fact, there was no record of him ever arriving either. Ezekiel, now aged five, was all but forgotten. Moved to a foster home, Ezekiel became increasingly withdrawn and bitter. By the time he was fourteen, and the Empire had taken control of the Academy, Ezekiel had signed on as ship's boy on the freighter Bunny's Box.

Operated by Captain Zorborris 'Bunny' Krellagros, the Box conducted tramp runs in the Minos Cluster, most of them interesting, but hardly thrilling. That is, until the Box attempted to run a load of bootleg holos and spice to the prison on Gesaril. They were spotted, and engaged by Captain Dulrain's Intrepid, and during a long battle, the Box was nearly crippled, and just barely made it across the big L, to limp back to Karideph for repairs. With half the crew killed in a hull breach, Ezekiel took on the roll of second mate, and was tasked with sensor duties.

After a few years running on the Box, Ezekiel's young ego pushed him to strike out alone. He took the opportunity to retrieve the bounties on his crew mates, and used the proceeds to invest in a battered HT-2200. He christened it the Inspid, and set out to make his fortune. The first thing he did was to pick up some worthwhile goodies, and head off for Gesaril, determined to land on the rock even if it was the last thing he did. The Inspid proved to be good to

it's name, and successfully managed to arrive at the prison, although he didn't manage to sell any of his wares (he couldn't find an airlock without guards anywhere, and didn't fancy 'linking the base').

He left without making any profit, and oblivious to the fact that the Intrepid was at Derilyn for repairs, and couldn't have stopped him anyway. Cheerfully assured of his expertise, Ezekiel left for pastures new, and arrived in Vashell Sector.

Making contacts and getting to know the lay of the land took Ezekiel through to his twenty first birthday, when he met a Wroonian starship dealer named Flitty Pato, who convinced him that his HT-2200 really needed upgrading, or he was in for an early demise. There was shoddy manoeuvring systems, not to mention inadequate engines. The CEC 9000 Ion Drives were swapped out for four Arakyd Rapyd military grade mass-pulse ion ramjets, with additional Quartexx Splicer turbochargers. These little beauties tripled the operational speed of the Inspid, and the advanced KDY Cotarner manoeuvring jets made life a lot easier for Tane.

With his newly uprated Inspid, Tane began working with a passion. He ran medical supplies to Ralltiir, guns to Dantooine, and once managed to get an Alliance agent onto Despraye. By this time, his name was becoming known, and bounties were piling up. Tane needed to disappear for a while, and returned to Vashell, where he holed up for the best part of a year in the 'perfectly legal' establishment of famed Correllian 'perfectly legal' commodity dealer, Joachim Vort. During this time, he was startled by the sudden destruction of Alderaan, by what looked like a mobile moon, and also seemed to be exactly the same moon as he saw at Despraye. The wanton destruction, and a mild wash of guilt, spurred Ezekiel on to run Imperial blockades, and as his runs became more daring, the risks also increased.

During a run after the battle of Hoth, he was unlucky enough to run afoul of one of the new Interdictor Cruisers. Unable to escape into

hyperspace, and pursued by TIEs from the garrison, Tane made a run for the surface. Racing down a canyon to find a hiding place, one of his Ion engines was destroyed, the Inspid careened out of control, bouncing off the rock faces until finally getting buried nose first in the swampy marsh below. Left for dead by the Imperials, Tane awoke, his face caked with dried blood, and missing an eye. It took him days, but he eventually patched the ship up enough to make it off the planet, and brought himself, and his ship, back to Vort's facility.

After days unconscious in a Bacta tank, Ezekiel began to recover fully, with a brand new chromium plated cybernetic eye, which glowed a brilliant red, and his once black hair now growing as white.

As his ship was repaired, Tane began his research into methods for overcoming this new threat that had laid him so low. Analysis of the data acquired in the encounter indicated the nature of the interdiction field, and Tane began to put his feelers out to acquire a crystal grav trap field generator. In the mean time, he extended the rear pods of the Inspid, and attached a repulsor 'catapult'. The new pods tended to get filled with the raw waste materials produced by his ship. On the few occasions he had need of this improvised chaff system, it proved to be very effective against tracking jammers.

It was three years before he took delivery of the CGT, and it took another three months to install the circular filtration paddles to the ventral and dorsal surfaces of the hull. This meant shifting the cockpit over to the starboard side, as well as upgrading the power core. This put him badly in hoc with most of his contacts and friends, but it proved to be worth it. The CGT had the effect of absorbing the artificial grav field particles, allowing the ship just enough time to jump out from under the Interdictors. Tane has never been very forthcoming about the nature of his ships uncanny ability to seemingly sail through interdiction fields, and no other known vessel has made this modification. In the years since then Tane acquired a small droid crew for

the Insipid, and spent a fair amount of money on her systems.

As the Empire waned, then fell, Tane drifted into retirement. For fifteen years, the fledgling Republic was both incapable, and unwilling, to blockade anywhere, and Tane tried to satisfy his thirst for adventure with smuggling, but it wasn't the same. Eventually, the Republic declared the Koornacht Cluster off-limits, and Tane promptly packed his ship with all of his possessions, all of his money, and as much cargo that might be in short supply, onto the Insipid, and set off. He got past the blockade all right, but got one hell of a surprise when the Yevethans proved to be less than receptive. His confidence was a little tarnished, and he never really got it back. After a few more years, during which he discovered that the Republic were simply not as much fun as the Imperials, he made a stop on the barren iceball known as Sheldor IV. He didn't intend to stay, but he never left.

Personality

Ezekiel has always been a quiet one, the deaths of both his parents at a young age has deprived him of much of his empathy, and his relationships with other sapient beings have always been slightly strained at best. He is far from psychotic, though, it's more like his understanding of the mechanics of social behaviour is a little twisted. He has a tendency to be very blunt, and has never quite got the hang of knowing when it is a good idea to tell a little white lie. Great big lies he's very good at, and he's had a lot of practise. In social situations he often seems distant, and somewhat vague. He makes very little small talk, and only really engages when he's talking about his work. He prefers to be on his own for a lot of the time, and has upgraded the autonomic systems of the Insipid so that he can fly it on his own. He does keep droids on board for various duties, but these are always models without vocalizers, he even finds R-series droids a little too talkative.

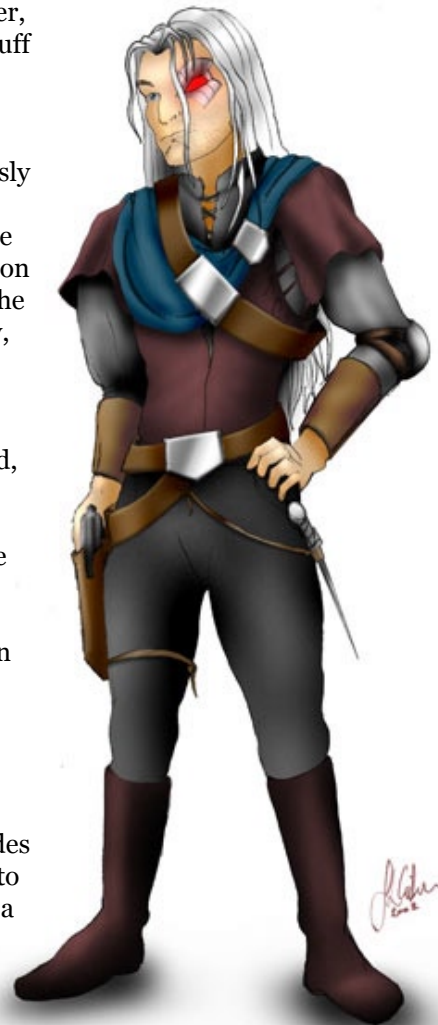
His oddness extends to the way

he chooses to live, his cabin is filled with every kind of piece of junk, clothing, dried food bars, datapads, holos, droid components and who knows what else. He's neither slovenly nor absent minded however, he merely believes that throwing stuff away is insane, if there is anyway it might be useful later on. The junk filling his cabin does not consist in any part, of garbage, he is fastidiously clean, he just has a heartfelt belief that his filing system theory will one day bear fruit. The system is based on anti-chaos theory, and simply put, he believes that from the chaotic array, an order of it's own will appear.

He dislikes the Empire for a number of reasons. He is not sure whether or not his Father was killed, or imprisoned by them, but he has few memories of Raym, and has never tried very hard to find out the truth. The Empire was responsible for much of the hardships he has suffered, and he has never forgotten the humiliation he felt at his crash. Also, he has lost many of those few whom he called friends to the Empire's guns. On the other hand, the only thing that really gets his heart racing is the Imperial blockades that are often set up. He will come to regret the victory of the Alliance to a degree, when the time comes.

Physical Description

Ezekiel Tane is not a tall man, though he is often portrayed in the media as a giant. Since his accident, his cybernetic eye has been his most prominent feature. He chose not to have a replica of his real eye made, mainly because he enjoys a secret mental game rather like tennis, watching people trying to settle their gaze normally, but fluttering between his two eyes at a ridiculous rate. His hair has been snow white since his crash, and he leaves it uncut, so it's both long, (down to his belt-line) and rather straggly. He's never really understood the art of appearance, and tends to wear whatever is lying around in his incomprehensibly untidy room. Consequently, he always appears shabby.



Ezekiel Tane - D6 (at his peak)

Type: Blockade Runner

Species: Human

Sex: Male

Age: 26

Height: 5'3"

Weight: 12 stone

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 3D+2, Blaster: Pistol 4D+2, Dodge 5D

KNOWLEDGE 3D

Bargain 5D+1, Planetary Systems 5D+2, Languages 4D+1, Tactics: Blockades 5D+1

MECHANICAL 3D+2

Space Transports 4D+1, Space Transports: HT-2200 6D+2, Starship Shields 5D, Starship Gunnery 5D+1

PERCEPTION 3D

Hide 4D+1, Search 4D, Sneak 4D+2, Persuasion 5D

STRENGTH 2D

Stamina 3D

TECHNICAL 3D+1

Starship Repair 5D+2, Security 4D+1, Droid Programming / Repair 5D

Special Abilities:

HiFold Type J Cybernetic eye with infra-red imaging system. (adds +1D to Search, or any roll involving sight, if in darkness with a heat source)

Move: 10

Force Points: 2

Dark Side Points: 0

Character Points: 14

Equipment:

The Insipid, modified HT-2200, Czerka 'Boondock' Blaster Pistol (4D+1, Range: 0-10 / 25 / 40, Ammo: 100), Large supply of miscellaneous clothing (Tane hasn't thrown away a garment since he was sixteen), Stock R5 Droid, R5-4U2P, Assorted junk from twelve years in space, most of which Tane has forgotten about, and lies strewn throughout his cabin
1,200 credits

Ezekiel Tane - d20 (at his peak)

Ezekiel Tane: Male Human Scoundrel 4; **Init** +2 (+2 Dex); **Defense** +15 (+3 class, +2 Dex); **Spd** 10 m; **VP/WP** 20/10; **Atk**+5 ranged (3d6/20 or DC 15 stun, Blaster pistol, range 10 m) or +3 melee (1d3, Unarmed); **SQ** Illicit barter, Lucky (1/day), Precise attack +1; **SV** Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +2; **SZ** M; **FP** 2; **DSP** 0; **Rep** 4; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 13, Challenge Code C.

Equipment: The Insipid, modified HT-2200, Czerka 'Boondock' Blaster Pistol, Large supply of miscellaneous clothing (Tane hasn't thrown away a garment since he was sixteen), R5-4U2P R5 Droid, Assorted forgotten junk from twelve years in space, 1,200 credits.

Skills: Appraise+4, Astrogate+6, Bluff+4, Computer Use+6, Craft (droids)+3, Demolitions+4, Diplomacy+4, Disable Device+4, Gather Information+5, Hide+6, Knowledge (alien species)+4, Knowledge (streetwise)+6, Knowledge (spacer lore)+4, Knowledge (tactics)+4, Listen+3, Move Silently+6, Pilot+12, Profession (spacehand)+5, Repair+8, Search+6, Spot+5, Tumble+6.

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Infamy, Skill Emphasis (Pilot), Starship Operation (space transport), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols), Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons).

Special: Ezekiel Tane wears a cybernetic eye equipped with Infrared technology. This gives Tane a +2 circumstance bonus for all Search and Spot rolls in low light or darkness.

The Insipid - d20

Craft: Corellian Engineering Corporation's HT-2200 Medium Freighter; **Class:** Space transport; **Cost:** Not Available for Sale (estimated construction cost 106,000 Credits); **Size:** Medium (58.8m length); **Initiative:** +0; **Crew:** 1 (Unique); **Passengers:** 8; **Cargo Capacity:** 800 metric tons; **Consumables:** 3 Months; **Hyperdrive:** None; **Maximum Speed:** Attack (Average, 8 squares/action); **Atmospheric Speed:** 1000 km/h (17 squares/action); **Maneuvers:** +0; **Defense:** 20 (+10 armor); **Hull Points:** 170 (DR 15); **Shield Points:** 50 (DR 15).

Weapon: Twin Heavy Laser Cannon (1); **Fire Arc:** Any; **Attack Bonus:** +0; **Damage:** 8d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB +0, S -2, M/L N/A.

Notes: Twin chaff launcher can be fired as a weapon and provides a +4 cover bonus to Defense, decreasing by 1 point per round. Ezekiel Tane receives a +4 bonus to all Repair checks on the Insipid.



The Insipid - D6

(Stats in brackets indicate modifications from stock)

Craft: Modified Corellian Engineering Corporation HT-2200 Medium FreighterType: Medium FreighterCost: N / A
Scale: StarFighterLength: (58.8 meters)Skill: Space Transports: HT-2200Crew: (1)Crew Skill: See Ezekiel Tane

Passengers: 8Cargo Capacity: 800 metric tonsConsumables: 3 monthsManeuverability: (1D+2)Space: (9)Atmosphere: 276; 1,000 kmh

Hyperdrive Multiplier: X2

Hyperdrive Backup: X15

Nav Computer: Yes

Hull: 5D+2

Shields: 1D+2

Sensors:

Passive: 10 / 0D

Scan: 25 / 1D

Search: 40 / 2D

Focus: 2 / 3D

Weapons:

1 Twin Heavy Laser Cannon

Fire Arc: Turret

Fire Control: 2D

Space: 1-8 / 16 / 25

Atmos.: 100-800 / 1.6Km / 2.5Km

Damage: 8D

1 Twin Chaff Launcher

Fire Arc: Rear

Fire Control: 1D

Space: 1-3 / 6 / 10

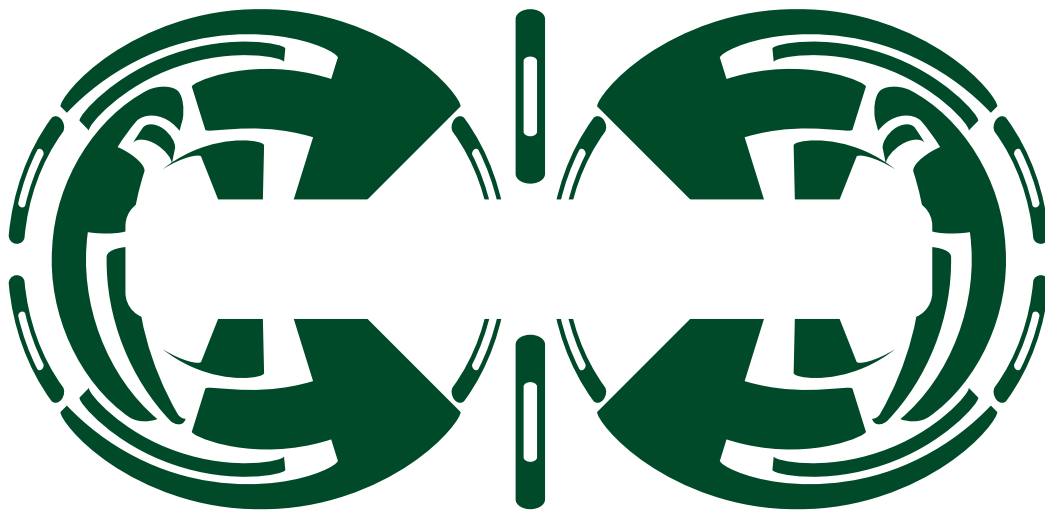
Atmos.: 100-300 / .6Km / 1Km

Damage: Adds 4D to the difficulty to acquire targeting on the ship. This damage decreases by 1D with each subsequent round.

Notes: Due to ease of design, all Space Transports Repair rolls on the Insipid, are made with a +5 modifier.

CGT Device.

The two round devices on the upper and lower sections of the hull re-orientate artificial graviton fields. In game terms, for one round only, the Insipid is able to engage it's hyperdrives even when it is in an Interdiction field. The ship may not make any other actions that round, and may not have it's shields up.



Galaxy-Wide News Nets

News G A L A X Y - W I D E **Nets**

EYREE, ERAYDIA—Confederate forces have seized the planet of Eraydia, marking the continued expansion of the Separatist movement in the Decimus Sector. An armed force consisting primarily of InterGalactic Banking Clan and Techno Union forces has taken up position above the planet, and early reports indicate that ground forces have seized the capital city of Eyree.

Eraydia, home of the galaxy's leading supplier of Peace Defender starfighters and sector headquarters of the Incom Corporation, was seen as having little to no tactical value in the war between the Republic and the Confederacy. While the capture of the Incom shipyards are certainly a dent in the Republic's space forces, the cost of converting such manufacturing plants to produce the infamous droid starfighters (and their many variations) would be quite high.

"Though we are taken by surprise that Eraydia was the target of the Confederate's strike, we will continue gathering intelligence on the invasion and act accordingly," commented Captain Sasel Hanover, who is in charge of the Republic Navy in the Decimus Sector. Early reports indicate that the planet, while quickly seized, may not be as heavily defended as other Confederate worlds. Captain Hanover would not rule out the possibility of a Republic incursion to retake the planet.

Eraydia, bet known for its massive flying creatures known as man-teons and its high-wind environment, has a population of nearly 650 million sentient beings.



Galaxy-Wide News Nets

News G A L A X Y - W I D E **Nets**

CORONET CITY, CORELLIA—A Corellian Security Officer charged with treason has evaded Corellian authorities in the Decimus Sector. The officer, a former sergeant by the name of Davin Mereel, is wanted on allegations of treason, espionage, and murder.

Coruscant authorities have connected Mereel with the recent attempted hijacking of the Corellian Engineering Corporation's new combat model of the Corellian Corvette. At the unveiling ceremony of the new model, which featured a speech and appearance by Corellia's new diktat, Mereel shot and killed a civilian attempting to flee into the safety of the ship. While details of the event remain sketchy, surveillance tapes clearly show the former CorSec operative opening fire on a human male, whose name was not released by Corellian Authorities.

"It is a shame that an officer with such an outstanding record of service could turn on his own people," said Hal Horn, the officer in charge of the investigation. "Though we apprehended Sergeant Mereel for a short time, someone within the Eraydian authorities arranged his escape." No mention was given as to who might have freed him. Officer Horn refused to comment.

Public records indicate that the former sergeant had a criminal history, though all charges filed against Mereel predate his police training.



Galaxy-Wide News Nets

News G A L A X Y - W I D E **Nets**

ESTALLE ISLAND, PROCOPIA—The major leaders of the Tapani Sector met today in the sector's capital city to discuss their role in the ongoing war between the Republic and the Confederacy. In past weeks, the noble houses of the Sector have debated joining sides or even staying neutral, and only today were able to come to a resolution.

The houses of the Tapani Sector have declared that their borders will remain open to ships of both sides of the war, but will not tolerate any aggressive actions by either side. The resolution, entitled *Treatise on the Civil War Threatening the Galactic Republic*, states that Tapani Sector nobles have the right to allow safe port to any ships in spaceports they control provided they have taken no aggressive actions against either side, or another planet in the Tapani Sector. It was declared, however, that in the situation where one side did open fire on the other the forces of the Tapani Sector were to support the Republic, a move that surprised many, including some of the Tapani nobles themselves.

"Though we strive for the support of the honorable Tapani Sector, we are pleased at their cooperation and limited aid in this struggle to maintain our unity," stated Supreme Chancellor Palpatine today in an address to the Republic Senate. It was feared for many weeks that the nobles would throw their support behind the Confederacy due to their massive monetary interests in galactic business. Such a move could be potentially the weight that tips the scales in the war, as many of the noble houses in the Tapani Sector have personal space fleets numbering in the hundreds and thousands of ships.

Local Tapani noble Melaine Hoth, leader of the Hoth family descended from the Jedi hero of the Battle of Ruusan, commented only that "after long hours of debate the decision was made to preserve both peace and our sovereignty" during the war.



CRACKEN'S REBEL OPERATIVES

Mycall Naytaan

by Ben Lundberg

Cracken's Rebel Operatives: Mycall Naytaan

Lieutenant Naytaan joined the alliance to fly fighters after his home system was overrun by the Empire. He had always been a good pilot, from the time he joined his systems starfighter defense force to when he became the commander of the Protectorate wing, Clausstvens elite force of fighters. Naytaan was either a member or the commander of this fighter wing of CloakShape fighters for twelve years, until they were all but wiped out when the Empire move to take over that system. Naytaan is one of four survivors from the entire military force that fought the Empire. He and his fellow pilots even managed to

hold off the invasion force for a few weeks, a testimony to their determination. He hates the Empire with a passion that not many can match, and flies much more aggressively when he is flying against them.

After the fall of his home system he searched out and joined the Rebel Alliance. He was assigned as

Mycall Naytaan - D6

Type: Brash Pilot

Species: Human

Height: 5'6" (1.67 m)

Weight: 165 lb (74.5 kg)

Gender: Male

Dexterity 3D+1

Blaster 4D+1, Dodge 4D+2, vehicle weapons 5D

Knowledge 2D+1

Bureaucracy 4D, intimidation 4D+2, planetary systems 5D+1, value 5D

Mechanical 4D+1

Astrogation 5D, repulsorlift ops 5D, starfighter piloting 6D+1, starfighter piloting: CloakShape Fighter 8D+2, starfighter piloting: X-wing 8D, starship gunnery 7D, starship shields 5D

Perception 2D+2

Bargain 5D, command 4D+2, hide 3D+2, search 4D, Sneak 4D, con 4D+1

Strength 2D+1

Brawling 3D+2, climbing/jumping 3D+1

Technical 3D

Computer programming/repair 3D+2, starfighter repair: X-wing 5D+2, starfighter repair: CloakShape Fighter 6D, droid programming/repair 4D

Force Sensitive: no

Force Points: 1

Character Points: 8

Move: 10

Equipment: blaster pistol (4D), comlink, flight suit, X-wing starfighter



commander of a squadron of hyper-capable CloakShape fighters called Challenger squad. After formation and training, their first assignment was the defense of a relief force sent to Clak'dor VII. This force was composed of several bulk freighters, a Corellian corvette and Challenger squad, it was to be a milk run. Unfortunately a Destab agent onboard one of the convoy ships

compromised the mission from the start. During the subsequent attacks from a pair Nebulan-B frigates and their fighter craft, Naytaan scored nine of the forty-eight kills, he also lost all but two members of his squadron. The relief effort was a failure.

Since he returned from that battle he never again flew a CloakShape, even though he was an expert pilot with the craft. He decided that he had seen too many good pilots lose their life in a CloakShape...they carried too many memories, but he still wished to fly. His solution was to request a transfer to a different fighter craft. He was assigned to an X-wing squadron in the Corellian sector conducting hit and fade attacks against Imperial vessels. He was quick to master the controls of this new craft and excelled as he had done while flying Cloakshapes. He turned down all offers for command of his own squadron or a promotion instead he worked at honing his skills. This work paid off when he was offered a position in Red squadron on Yavin base. Naytaan died while flying Red 9 above the Death-Star.

Naytaan was short and slender with an angular face. His nose was the most prominent feature of his face. His hair was a dark shade of brown relatively closely cut to his head, he preferred being clean shaven.

Mycall Naytaan - d20

Male Human, Soldier 7/Star-

ship Ace 2; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Bonus); **Def** 20 (+2 Dex, +8 Class); **Spd** 10m; **VP/WP** 61/11; **Atk** +10/+5 or +6/+6/+1 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol), +8/+3 melee (1d3, punch); **SQ** Familiarity +1, Starship Defense; **SV** Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +5; **SZ** M; **FP**: 1; **Rep**: +3; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, comlink, flight suit, X-Wing starfighter

Skills: Astrogate +10, Bluff +6, Computer Use +6, Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (planetary systems) +8, Knowledge (starfighter tactics) +8, Move Silently +6, Pilot +14, Read/Write Basic, Repair +8, Search +6, Speak Basic, Speak Huttese, Speak Ryl

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Heroic Surge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Pinpoint Accuracy, Starship Dodge (starfighter), Starship Operation (starfighter), Starship Point Blank Shot (starfighter), Weapons Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons)

Cracken's Rebel Field Guide: MerenData Universal Corporation's Multipurpose Datapad

By Robert Thompson

In the field, a person may find himself in dire need of tools. A good special forces officer knows to always be prepared for every situation, but cannot always carry what he needs. That is why MerenData Universal has created its multipurpose datapad.

MerenData's latest version of this datapad has several points built into it to attach certain items. The field datapad is mounted upon an armband for easy access, and compressed to be more easily carried. Its possible attachments are a glowrod, a comlink, a holorecorder, a holoprojector, a security kit, sensor pack and a tool kit. With three small mount points, it has a limited amount of space, but for the amount of tools the person can carry, it is quite worth it. When considering that a person can use this datapad to open mechanical and computerized locks, hack into a mainframe, and contact

your friends in the dark while transmitting a

message, one can see the practical uses of this in the field.

MerenData Corporation has its own line of attachment products. Simple market products will not fit on the datapad. The datapad has a built in power source that is enough to provide power for all its attachments. To attach a recording rod and holoprojector would simply take up one space due to the design, and the antenna used for a comlink can be used to remote access the Holonet (given an available transceiver) and other local communications systems. The glowrod is used both to project light, and to illuminate the screen of the datapad in the dark, allowing the person to read it even in pitch darkness. The sensor pack gives the person a thorough readout of the area, which can be useful when one finds themselves in unfamiliar territory.

The datapad itself still provides all of the normal functions for a regular datapad with more advanced

features and some expanded memory. However, with the comlink attachment, a person can use it to remote access other computer systems, and even the holonet, making it an effective portable computer. If using the security kit attachment, the datapad can easily pick any electronic lock, mechanical lock, or disable virtually any mechanical or computerized device. The datapad is also capable of downloading specific blueprints, to more easily manipulate them. The holorecorder and projector can be used to record information, play it back, edit it, and broadcast it via datacards or remote transmission. The hands free sensor pack is great for scanning and recording data that a recording rod simply cannot pick up. Finally, the tool kit will allow a person to download schematics for a ship and repair it much more efficiently than without prior knowledge.

The advanced datapad provides a +2 equipment bonus for all computer use and knowledge checks. Mastercraft versions provide higher

bonuses (+3 for a +1 item, +4 for a +2 item, or a +5 for a +3 item). When coupled with a security kit, this bonus also applies to all disable device and demolitions checks. When coupled with the tool kit, this bonus applies to repair, and can be used untrained. When using the sensor pack, the equipment bonus applies to listen, search, and spot. The statistics for the glowrod, holorecorder, and holoprojector remain the same.

MerenData Universal Datapad

Cost: 1,500

Weight: 2kg

MerenData Universal Security Kit attachment

Cost: 900

Weight: 0.5 kg

MerenData Universal Tool Kit attachment

Cost: 400

Weight: 0.5 kg

MerenData Universal Glowrod attachment

Cost: 50

Weight: 0.5 kg

MerenData Universal Sensor Pack attachment

Cost: 2750

Weight: 2kg

Merendata Universal Comlink attachment

Cost: 300

Weight: 0.1 kg

Merendata Universal Recording Rod attachment

Cost: 550

Weight: 0.5 kg

Merendata Universal Holoprojector attachment

Cost: 1,500

Weight: 0.5 kg

Wanted by Cracken: Darth Deminimus

By Ben Flood-Paddock

Name: Baron Yudo AKA Darth Deminimus

Type: Quixotic Sith

Species: Unknown

Age: 400+

Height: 73 cms

Weight: 27 kg

Physical Description:

Baron Yudo is short by any standards. Hailing from an unknown planet, and having never revealed his species, Yudo cuts an unimpressive figure on first examination. His green skin, beginning to show the first signs of aging is wrapped around a disproportionate head, featuring two long pointed ears and a tiny nose. His hands and feet feature three digits. On the hands, one of these is opposed. Yudo wears the robes of a Sith Lord, and carries his long black hair tightly tied into a ponytail. He is quite often found wearing thin sunglasses.

Background:

Yudo first came to the attention of the Imperials



during a routine survey of Dagobah. The little chap strode out of the swamps and began accosting the ancient ISC scout, demanding to know why he was so late. After the ISC scout professed to having no idea what Yudo was talking about, Yudo raised his hands in fury, mumbled arcane words, and the scout dropped dead at his feet. (These facts reported later by the scouts' faithless guardian droid 'Gyt')

As Yudo strapped into the cockpit, Gyt informed the decrepit astromech 'Zart-face' of their masters' death. After a full .32 seconds of digital celebration, Zart-face immediately took control of the ship and set a course for the nearest ISC base as per standard procedures. Both Gyt and Zart-face expressed mild confusion as to Yudo's actions during the short jump; the control consoles were clearly powered down at the time,

though Yudo appeared to be convinced he was piloting the vessel.

Whilst Gyt and Zart-face gave extensive reports of their master's death to ISC Administration druids, Yudo

Darth Deminimus - D6

Dexterity 2D+1

Dodge 4D+2, Melee Combat 3D+2, Melee Parry 4D

Knowledge 2D

Scholar: Sith Lore 4D+1, Scholar: Sith Legends 4D+2, Languages 4D+1, Survival 4D+2, Survival: Swamps 5D+2

Mechanical 2D+2

Perception 3D+1

Search 5D, Search: Scavenge 6D+1

Strength 2D

Technical 1D+1

Special Abilities:

This character is **NOT** Force Sensitive.

Force Points: 0

Character Points: 4

Move: 4

Equipment: Sith Robes. Sunglasses.

disappeared.

Days later, he arrived at the Imperial Navy offices on the planet. One Lieutenant Gadbris was having his lunch at the time the short green force of malevolence entered the room. After listening to a tirade of pure vehemence, during which time a small crowd had accrued, Gadbris, still chewing on a Gdrupti femur, pointed out the similarity between Yudo's head and certain parts of Gamorrean anatomy and ordered him to leave or face the consequences. Yudo lowered his sunglasses, raised his hand, and muttered under his breath. Gadbris started to choke, rapidly turning blue and dropping to his desk. Attempts to revive the officer were unsuccessful.

Yudo evidently realised that perhaps such underlings did not recognise him, and declared to the stunned crowd:

"Darth Deminimus I am! Wield I do the Force might of the Side Dark!"

For many years, doing whatever anyone name Darth said had been at the core part of Imperial training, and promptly the officers present acceded to his every whim. So it was that merely hours later, Baron Yudo was leaving

the system aboard the Star Destroyer Yevgeni.

Yudo began issuing orders and demands with ever increasing zeal. A 3,000 story palace was constructed on Talakorr Prime in just eight months, causing in it's hasty construction, the deaths of 12,328 Talakark slaves.

The Imperial Star Yards on Hoottrinic Zabblaxis received orders to construct a personal vessel for Darth Deminimus, 'The Mighty Sword and Justice of Deminimus'. Not only larger than any warship ever designed before (22.3 kilometres) but with an almost unfeasible number of guns and the rather annoying feature of having decks 1.2 meters in height. (Meaning that Darth Deminimus was perfectly comfortable, but everyone else had to crawl on their hands and knees, even when operating the critical ships systems.)

For over a year, Darth Deminimus terrorised the Imperial forces in Keplokta Sector. His seemingly unconnected and ill conceived plans seeming to be strokes of genius. His aims unfathomable, his grand vision a secret to all but himself.

The keel of the 'The Mighty Sword and Justice of Deminimus' was actually laid by the time Lord Vader caught up with him. After a brief private meeting,

GM Notes

Yudo has **no Force ability** whatsoever. He believes that he is a Sith Lord after a brief contact with Yoda. (He's also not a Baron, he thought it sounded more appropriate) Yudo broke into Yoda's hut several times, and studied the small library, mainly because he was bored, and partly because he was going insane. After this had occurred once too often, Yoda confronted Yudo. The Jedi Master walked off in disgust inadvertently shattering what tiny fragments held Yudo's psyche together. Yudo has been extremely lucky so far. The ISC Scout had just stepped on a Dagobari Sting-Shroom, which caused his extremely rapid death, Lieutennant Gadbris choked on his food. After the Gadbris incident, no-one seemed to challenge his authority.

Rather than exterminating the irritating Yudo, Palpatine instead decided that **appearing** to be a Sith Lord was almost as good as actually being one in regards keeping the troops in line, hence he sent Yudo back out, however, accompanied by Sura Nemtek and Harva Le Shale, two of his Hands, with orders to ensure that anyone Yudo attempted to kill was dispatched in a manner consistent with the vaguely traditional Sith choke. Palpatine also had Vader 'teach' Deminimus the Sith Throttle, so that Yudo could be pretty much guaranteed to use only that technique when dispatching his various victims. The Hands have also been charged to eliminate Deminimus if he ever seems to become more of a problem than a tool. The Hands also are tasked to remove dead bodies mainly so they can retrieve their needles from their throats before anyone notices them.

Darth Deminimus - d20

Male ?? Scoundrel 1; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Def 13 (+1 Dex, +2 Class); Spd 10m; VP/WP 6/11; Atk +0 melee (1d3, punch), +1 ranged (by weapon); SQ Illicit barter; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +1; SZ M; FP 0; Rep +3; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Equipment: Sith Robes. Sunglasses.

Skills: Bluff +8, Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (Sith legends) +4, Knowledge (Sith lore) +4, Read/Write Basic, Search +4, Sense Motive +3, Speak Basic, Spot +5, Survival +3

Feats: Infamy, Persuasive, Weapons Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons)

Deminimus was escorted at high speed back to Coruscant, for a meeting with the Emperor Palpatine himself. Shortly thereafter, Deminimus was to be found in high priority sectors, bringing the will of Palpatine himself to the front lines. However, the 'The Mighty Sword and Justice of Deminimus' was immediately scrapped, pending delivery of an Executor Star Destroyer nearing completion at Kuat. Also, Deminimus was now accompanied wherever he went by 'the Blynd Systers' two female companions their eyes tightly wrapped in the same black cloth that hid their forms from prying eyes. The 'Blynd Systers' only duty appears to be removal of the bodies Deminimus leaves in his wake, a task they do with blinding efficiency.

Deminimus has, since that time, brought many senior Imperials to their final career review, and masterminded several successful campaigns. Including the eradication

DEXTERITY 3D

Blaster 7D+1, brawling parry 5D, dodge 7D+1, melee combat 8D, melee parry 6D, thrown weapons 9D+2, thrown weapons Kolkarr needles 9D+2

KNOWLEDGE 2D

Alien Species 4D, languages 4D+1, survival 7D+2, willpower 6D+2

MECHANICAL 3D+1

Astrogation 6D, repulsorlift operation 8D+2, sensors 5D, space transports 7D+1, starship gunnery 6D+2, starship shields 4D

PERCEPTION 3D+1

Bargain 7D, command 4D+1, con 9D, hide 4D, search 8D+2, sneak 7D+2

STRENGTH 2D+2

Brawling 8D, climbing/jumping 6D+1, lifting 6D, stamina 6D

Harva Le Shale - D6

TECHNICAL 4D

Computer programming/repair 8D+2, repulsorlift repair 6D+1, security 7D+1, starship repair 6D+1

Special Abilities:

Force Skills: CONTROL 1D SENSE 2D ALTER 1D

Force Powers:

Control Powers:

Accelerate Healing, Resist Stun
Sense: Life Sense Receptive
Telepathy

This character is Force-sensitive.

Force Points: 1

Dark Side Points: 1

Character Points: 09

Move: 10

Equipment:

Robes, datapad, 6 Kolkarr throwing needles.

Sura Nemtek - D6

DEXTERITY 3D+1

Blaster 7D, brawling parry 6D+2, dodge 7D, melee combat 8D+1, melee parry 7D, missile weapons 5D, thrown weapons 8D+1, thrown weapons: Kolkarr Needles 11D+2

KNOWLEDGE 3D

Alien Species 9D, languages 6D+1, planetary systems 5D+2, streetwise 6D+2, survival 6D+1, willpower 6D+2

MECHANICAL 2D+2

Astrogation 4D+1, repulsorlift operation 5D+1, sensors 5D+2, space transports 9D, starfighter piloting 4D+1, starship gunnery 6D+2, starship shields 4D

PERCEPTION 3D

Bargain 5D, command 5D+2, con 8D+1, hide 3D+1, investigation 4D+1, persuasion 5D, search 7D, sneak 9D

STRENGTH 3D

Brawling 5D+1, climbing/jumping 5D, lifting 5D+2, stamina 6D+1,

TECHNICAL 3D

Blaster Repair 6D, computer programming/repair 7D+1, first

aid 6D+1, repulsorlift repair 5D+1, security 6D, starship repair 6D+1

Special Abilities:

Force Skills: CONTROL 1D SENSE 3D ALTER 1D

Force Powers:

Control Powers:

Accelerate Healing, Resist Stun
Sense: Life Detection Life Sense
Receptive Telepathy

This character is Force-sensitive.

Force Points: 2

Dark Side Points: 1

Character Points: 11

Move: 10

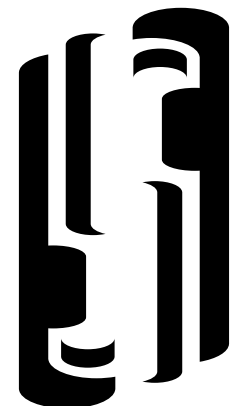
Equipment:

Robes, datapad, 6 Kolkarr throwing needles. (Immediate Difficult Stamina roll to avoid instant contraction of all muscles within 6 inches of the impact site. If this area is the throat, death from asphyxiation follows very shortly afterwards, otherwise, Damage: Strength + 2 plus 4D+2 poison damage for six rounds)

of the rebellious Dutni people of Wularandi 4.

Personality:

Yudo is at best a tad eccentric. He seems able to create plans that at first seem almost completely mad, but they work. His is extremely arrogant, his grammar is appalling, and he has total confidence in his own abilities. He is never seen without the 'Blynd Systers' though he has never been observed to have any verbal contact with them, he seems to acknowledge their existence only when they occasionally get in the way of one of his frequent 'about-face and storm off' manoeuvres.



Sura Nemtek - d20

Adult Female Human Jedi Guardian 3/Tech Specialist 1; Init +2 (+2 Dex); **Def** 16 (+2 Dex, +4 Class); **Spd** 10m; **VP/WP** 33/14; **Atk** +5 melee (1d3+2, punch), +5 ranged (by weapon); **SQ** Deflect (Attack -4, Defense +1); **SV** Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +6; **SZ** M; **FP**: 2; **Rep**: +1; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 13.

Skills: Astrogate +4, Bluff +4, Knowledge (Alien species) +8, Pilot +8, Read/Write Basic, Repair +8, Search +6, Speak Basic, Survival +2

Force Skills: Heal Self +3, See Force +5, Telepathy +5

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Control, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (lightsaber), Force-Sensitive, Iron Will, Skill Emphasis (Repair), Sense, Weapons Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons, starship weapons)

Harva Le Shale - d20

Female Human Soldier 4/Force Adept 4; Init +2 (+2 Dex); **Def** 18 (+2 Dex, +6 Class); **Spd** 10m; **VP/WP** 49/12; **Atk** +8/+3 melee (1d3+1, punch), +9/+4 ranged (1d4+1, Kolkar throwing needles); **SV** Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +8; **SZ** M; **FP**: 1; **DSP**: 1; **Rep**: -1; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Equipment: Robes, datapad, 6 Kolkar throwing needles

Skills: Astrogate +6, Bluff +3, Computer Use +4, Diplomacy +3, Hide +7, Knowledge (alien species) +6, Move Silently +7, Pilot +8, Read/Write Basic, Repair +5, Search +5, Speak Basic, Swim +5

Force Skills: Empathy +5, Enhance Senses +4, Heal Another +7, Heal Self +6, See Force +5, Telepathy +7

Feats: Alertness, Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Force-Sensitive, Iron Will, Low Profile, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (Knife), Weapons Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibro weapons)

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Sense

Throwing Needle - D6

Model: Kolkar Guild Custom Throwing weapon

Type: Poisoned Needle

Scale: Character

Skill: Thrown Weapons: Kolkar Needle

Cost: 385

Availability: 4 R, F or X

Difficulty: Difficult (If stabbing with a needle)

Range: 0-2/5/7

Damage: Str+2 plus poison damage

These weapons are hand made by the Kolkar Guild from a single spun fibre of Borjia Arachnoid silk, with delicate micro-glass flights, baked to durasteel hardness in a clay oven for over a standard year.

Only two centimetres in length, these weapons are nonetheless extremely deadly in the hands of an expert. Typically, they are soaked in Borjia Arachnoid venom, which is retained in the Arachnoid silk as microscopic crystals after drying. This poison causes the musculature of most beings to instantly contract very painfully. (Immediate Very Difficult Stamina roll / Fortitude Save (DC 17) to avoid instant contraction of all muscles within 6 inches of the impact site. Difficult Stamina roll / Fortitude Save (DC 15) to avoid contraction for five rounds afterwards. If this area is the throat, death from asphyxiation follows very shortly afterwards.)

The needles are typically thrown by placing one on the longest digit, and flicking it with an opposed digit.

Weapon Type: Thowing Needle

Weapon Proficiency Group: Simple

Cost: 385

Damage: 1d4

Range Inc: 4 m

Fort DC: 17

Multifire/Autofire: -

Hardness: 2 **WP:** 1

Availability: Rare, Illegal

Critical: 20

Weight: 0.1 kg

Type: Special

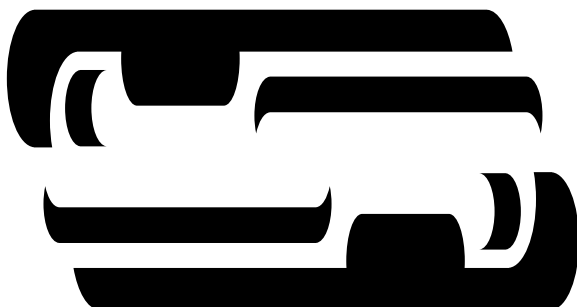
Size: Tiny

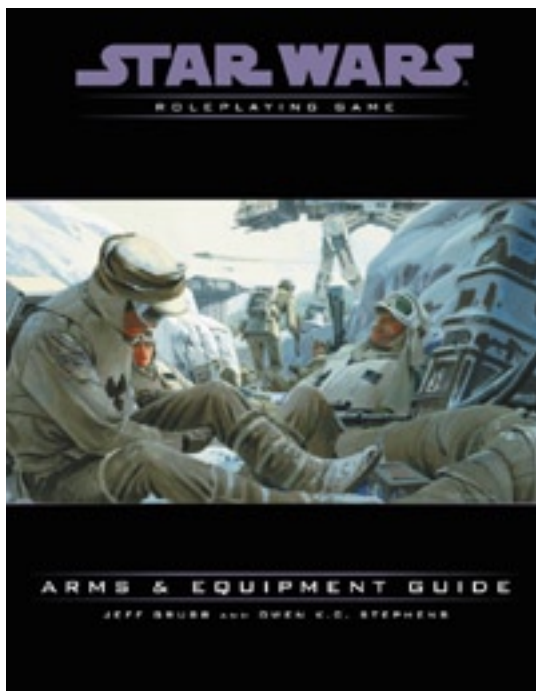
Break DC: 12

Era: All

Special: Kolkar Guild throwing needles are almost always coated with a poison or toxin. Consult the Star Wars Roleplaying Game for rules on poisons.

Throwing Needle - d20





Reviewed!

Arms and Equipment Guide

Title: Arms and Equipment Guide
 Author: Jeff Grubb and Owen K.C. Stephens
 Publisher: Wizards of the Coast
 Format: 96-page Softcover
 Released: 11 October 2002
 Cost: \$ 21.95 (US)

Another topic-oriented sourcebook that has been waiting in the wings for a good, long time now (much as Starships of the Galaxy did almost a year ago), the Arms and Equipment Guide is one sourcebook that all gamers have been clamoring for. If there's one thing that gamers like to have it's more toys for their characters, and this book promises to give everyone exactly what they've been waiting for. When previewed at GenCon this year, the book reminded me of one of my favorite WEG Sourcebooks: Gundark's Personal Gear. It's little surprise, as the artwork and premise of the book seem so close they might as well be identical. More blasters than you can shake a stick at, and a whole mess of other gear to boot. Sounds like a tinkerer's dream, complete with droids and vehicles thrown into the mix as well.

The book starts off with a short, standard introduction and then jumps into the first chapter of the book with little hesitation. Possible the meatiest chapter, the first one deals with weapons of all kinds. But before getting into the crunchy bits of the chapter we're given something that fans have cried out for since the new revised rules came out: weapon modification rules. Though I expected them to be a length explanation of everything that can be done to a weapon, I was surprised (pleasantly) with a simple but effective system that not only allows modification but maintains balance so that such weapons do not quickly become fodder for abuse. I will predict now, however, that some people will be

disappointed with the system; it allows a certain number of modifications to be made based not on each individual items, but based on a slightly more abstract formula. As a Gamemaster, it's something I embrace as it allows my players to make their weapons into something special and unique without having to worry about them going overboard. Additionally, the method for using the Repair skill to modify the weapon is plainly laid out in a step-by-step process, removing any confusion or mystery. It should be noted that in the actual text of many weapons and items it lists customizations that can be made beyond those listed at the beginning of each chapter, allowing tinkerers a few new options based on individual options.

The weapons chapter is also incredibly thorough and contains more blasters than I could have ever hoped for. If someone complains they can't find a weapon that fits their style after reading this book then they will never find something. Blasters get the largest coverage in the chapter, but not to go unmentioned are slugthrowers (which get several pages) as well as other nonstandard weapons. Some things to look for that I found particularly good inclusions are some neat sidebars that detail various new types of ammunition for slugthrowers, wrist launchers, etc. making them all that much more fantastic. Previously, slugthrowers did little in my mind to differentiate themselves from modern firearms of the real world, but apply some of these new ammunition types and you've got some excellent weapons with a better Star Wars feel. Other interesting additions are pretty much the entire arsenal of Kyle Katarn in Jedi Outcast, great illustrations of some Ryyk blades (both grips), and the Xerrol Nightstinger sniper rifle (one of my personal favorites). Oddly enough, there are some startling omissions that I would have thought would be obvious for inclusion....Stohkli Spray Sticks, for one. But despite that, there are just some awesome other additions too...make sure you check out the Rodian Repulsor Throwing Razor.

The armor chapter is a little skimpy, but that may be due to the fact that very few people in the Star Wars universe actually wear armor. The chapter begins with a similar section on armor modification, then moves into the armor divided up by class. Pretty standard fare here, though I was disappointed to note the lack of Mandalorian armor....knowing how popular Jango Fett has become, and how popular Boba has been for years, it seems like an obvious choice. But, shows you what I know. Not much remarkable in the armor chapter, though it does offer quite a few standard armors that can be heavily modified.

The droid chapter is very similar to the weapons chapter in that it presents a solid cross-section of the

droids available in the Star Wars universe. One of the first sidebars in the chapter gives details for how to use each droid as a player character, which is a welcome change from the former attitude that players won't want to play droids. Moving into the droids themselves, we get a great array of popular droids as well as some of the more obscure ones as well. The R-series astromechs are detailed from R3's to R7's, we get stats for LE repair droids (like Leebo from *Shadows of the Empire*), lots of movie droids (including battle droid commanders, CZ droids, mouse droids), as well as some brand-new droids like the Colicoid Eradicator battle droid. Though nothing truly stands out as amazing, droid lovers will be thrilled with the new options. A disappointment, though, is that there are no new modifications for droids, no new parts, no new equipment...though some can probably be reverse-engineered from the droids in the book. A solid chapter, though it could have been better if there were more to it.

The vehicle chapter almost seems out of place in this book; after a book like *Starships of the Galaxy*, many expected a similar book for ground vehicles. However, the chapter does give lots of new speeders and vehicles for gamers to play with. More disappointing, though, is that the vehicle modification rules use the same simplistic rules that the weapons and armor chapters do; what vehicles needed were a construction-point based system like Owen Stephens wrote up for the *starships* book which could then be used to further modify the vehicles. However, the authors have taken a peculiar attitude it seems and treat vehicles like less viable options for players than starships. Also disappointing is the lack of vehicles from *Attack of the Clones* or any modern EU. It seems like this chapter definitely got the short end of the stick, especially given how many new vehicles we've seen with the advent of *Clone Wars* literature and EU. One nice addition to this chapter is the sidebar about using the *Starfighter Ace* as a vehicle ace for both NPCs

and player characters. Still, this chapter had a lot more potential and, while what it presents is very good, could have been more with the addition of more page space.

The final chapter is a decent one covering generic nonweapon equipment. There's not much remarkable about this chapter other than to say there are no outstanding toys or new gadgets to play with. Still, the chapter gets the job done and gives lots of new items for players to pick up. The chapter feels a little tacked on, but I don't know how much more I could have asked for.

Overall, the book is a solid sourcebook and a must-have for players and GMs alike. While I think a lot more could have been done with some sections, my only real complaints are that there's not enough here (which is always a good sign). One neat feature is that all the stats in the book present many new fields that give information like rarity, era, hardness, break DCs, and other information that the *Core Rulebook* leaves players guessing about. If you're a fan of *Star Wars* tech and want to see new equipment, droids, or vehicles in this game, go pick up this book. It's solid and worth the money.

Content: 85%
 Art: 85%
 Layout: 95%
 Game Material: 90%
 Overall Score: 85% (not an average)

Analysis by Paul Klein

The number of each item type is listed, followed by the number of illustrations for items of that type in parentheses.

WEAPONS:

Pistols: 13 (7)
 Heavy Pistols: 9 (6)
 Holdout Pistols: 8 (6)
 Sporting Pistols: 4 (2)
 Rifles & Carbines: 13 (6)
 Sporting Rifles: 6 (1)
 Light Repeating Blasters: 1 (1)
 Ion Guns: 4 (2)
 Disrupters: 3 (1)

Slugthrower Pistols: 7 (1)
 Slugthrower Rifles: 2 (1)
 Dart Pistols: 2 (1)
 Flchette Launchers: 3 (1)
 Crossbows & Magna Casters: 2 (1)
 Wrist Weapons: 4 (0)
 Regular Melee Weapons: 7 (2)
 Vibro Weapons: 4 (2)
 Melee Stun Weapons: 5 (3)
 Grenades: 10 (4)
 Grenade Launchers: 3 (0)
 Flame Projectors: 4 (2)
 Sonic Weapons: 3 (2)
 Species-specific Ranged Weapons: 3 (3)
 Weapon Attachments and Accessories: 4 (0)
 120 Weapons in all (plus 4 accessories) accompanied by 55 illustrations (46%)

ARMOR:

Light Armor: 7 (7)
 Medium Armor: 2 (2)
 Heavy Armor: 1 (1)
 Powered Armor: 4 (4)
 Other Protection Gear: 3 (0)
 14 suits of armor in all (plus 3 "other") accompanied by 14 illustrations (100%)

DROIDS:

Astromech: 7 (7)
 Repair: 4 (4)
 Protocol/Commercial: 7 (7)
 Medical: 2 (2)
 Military: 4 (4)
 Security/Guard: 5 (5)
 Surveillance/Probe: 3 (3)
 Messenger: 2 (2)
 Labor: 6 (6)
 Other: 5 (5)
 45 droid in all accompanied by 45 illustrations (100%)

VEHICLES:

Airspeeders/Cloud Cars: 5 (5)
 Gliders/Jetpacks/Rocket Packs: 6 (0)
 Speeder Bikes/Swoops: 8 (5)
 Civilian Ground Speeders: 13 (5)
 Military Ground Speeders: 6 (0)
 Walkers: 5 (5)
 Seacraft: 1 (0)
 Other: 3 (0)
 47 vehicles in all accompanied by

20 illustrations (43%)

EQUIPMENT:

Breathing Devices: 5 (3)

Communications: 17 (4)

Detection: 15 (1)

Sensor Jammers/Detection Countermeasures: 5 (0)

Medical: 7 (3)

Security: 7 (2)

Survival: 6 (0)

Tools/Other: 6 (0)

68 pieces of equipment in all accompanied by 13 illustrations (19%)

All in all:

301 entries in the book (not including specialized ammo, see below)
accompanied by a total of 147 illustrations (49%)

Specialized Ammo:

3 slugthrower ammunitions

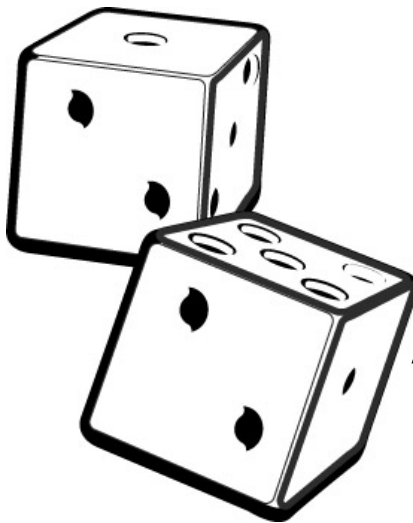
4 special darts

8 wrist rocket ammunitions

Plus sidebars on: Blast Radius, Droid Heroes (almost full page), Vehicles Aces, Medical Kits, Escape Pods and Tool Kits. Rules for customizing and personalizing weapons, armor, droids, vehicles, equipment, and a note on the black market are included.

Before the book was released, I was afraid 96 pages would not do the book's topics justice (I spoke with Owen Stephens about this same topic). Well with the exception of armor, I was wrong. Well over 300 total entries with about half illustrated? I'm very impressed.

This book has 45 droid entries, whereas WEG's *Fantastic Technology: Droids* book had 47 (but droids is only 1 of 5 topics in this book). This book has 224 weapons, armor suits and pieces of equipment, whereas WEG's *Gundark's Fantastic Technology Personal Gear* had a total of 196 (and that book was 16 pages longer). Of course WEG also had *Galladinium's Fantastic Technology* as well (about 200 entries in all 5 categories weapons, armor, droids, vehicles, equipment), but that is in a second book. And, of course, WEG never compiled a pretty comprehensive list of vehicles in one source, so have 47 here is pretty substantial.



Dice, Camera, Action!

Running a Proper Star Wars Game

by Kelly St. Clair

end of the 20th century. Like Homer and Shakespeare before him, he took stories that were already well-known to his audience and made them his own. Now it's our turn.

These are the essential ingredients that should be in the kitchen of any STAR WARS game master or storyteller. Don't be afraid to toss other things into the pot and see how they taste. Some things may not mix well, in which case you'll have decide whether you're still following George's recipe or inventing your own dish. Just be sure your players know what they're getting before they dig in.

Heroes

They were in the wrong place at the wrong time. Naturally, they became heroes.

-- Princess Leia Organa, *The Journal of the Whills*

While it is certainly possible to run a morally-ambiguous "fringe" campaign in the STAR WARS setting,

Mix one part Flash Gordon, one part Western, one part World War 2, one part Errol Flynn and one part Toshiro Mifune. Add a cup of ancient myth and a dash of romance. Sprinkle sugar on top for the kids. Bake for six to twelve hours. Serves millions.

It's a simple enough recipe, but one that's easy to get wrong. Some cooks are merely inexperienced, while others don't understand their ingredients, or worse, try to make substitutions and end up with something entirely different. There are plenty of resources to help the gamemaster or author learn the craft of telling good stories. This article offers some specific, practical advice on how to tell good STAR WARS stories.

There is very little in STAR WARS that is original. George Lucas' genius was in finding a new and exciting way to combine all of these old cliches of the adventure genre (some of them very old indeed) into a myth for the

the evidence of the movies suggests that once characters get swept up in the larger conflicts that seem to regularly engulf the Galaxy, they must either choose sides or get run over for standing in the middle of the road (e.g. Lando). It helps to have powerful friends when some Hutt wants to make you his new dancing girl or a Dark Lord decides to alter the deal.

Of course, it's not easy being a hero either. Heroes are constantly faced with trials and obstacles to overcome, both external and internal. Each test is an opportunity for triumph or a tragic fall, and the higher one climbs, the farther it is to the bottom. Lucas' saga presents us with both outcomes: the father's failure, the son's success.

Heroes do not have to be uninteresting cutouts who never have impure thoughts. The most obvious counter-example is Han Solo, a scoundrel and rogue, but apparently even Jedi Knights are not above telling a white lie or cheating a cheater if they believe it to be for the greater good. This does not mean that "heroic" PCs can do whatever they like and let the ends justify the means; that kind of hubris is what allowed Anakin Skywalker to be seduced by the Dark Side. The moment when Luke strikes off his father's hand and realizes how close he is to the edge himself perfectly illustrates Nietzsche's warning:

"He who fights monsters should see to it that he does not become a monster.

And when you stare into the abyss, the abyss stares back into you."

Test and tempt your heroes, allowing them to demonstrate the strength of their hearts as well as their marksmanship or piloting skills. (As Yoda commented, being a "great warrior" isn't enough.) Don't let them become complacent in their white hats or the rightness of their cause. Present them with cautionary examples of how easy it is to do the wrong thing for the right reason -- fallen Jedi, Rebels turned terrorists, an ally who betrays them to the enemy to save his own family, the old war hero with a dark secret.

It's okay for your heroes to suffer setbacks now and then. Without risk, there is no drama, and a victory won without effort or cost is a hollow one. Most of ESB is, at best, a draw for the Good Guys; they escape to fight another day, minus one of their own, with new knowledge and character development (some of it painful). Things looked pretty bad at Yavin, Endor, Naboo and Geonosis for a while, too. But in the end, the heroes succeeded despite the odds -- because that's STAR WARS.

Such dramatic reversals of fortune are harder to engineer in an unscripted game with random dice rolls. However, elements like Force Points, the Wild Die, and allies appearing unexpectedly (like the Millennium Falcon diving out of the sun, Ewoks jumping out of the bushes, or Mace Windu stepping out of the shadows to announce that the party is over) can certainly help. Finally, if your players have done their best all night, it would really suck to have the last torpedo miss the exhaust port due to a lousy roll. Do everything short of blatant cheating to

make sure letdowns like that don't happen.

Villains

"His Excellency hopes that you will die honorably. But should any of you wish to beg for mercy, the great Jabba the Hutt will now listen to your pleas."

The faces of evil are many. Some antagonists are redeemable or misguided; others may just be selfish and mercenary, or intimidated or otherwise coerced into doing the bidding of their dark masters. The real villains, however, are always rotten to the core.

The SW:RPG classifies characters as extras, supporting characters, and lead characters. In villain organizations, this translates into a pyramid with goons (also known as mooks, thugs, minions, grunts, etc.) on the bottom; one or more levels of henchmen and advisors in the middle, along with bounty hunters and other "consultants" who work with/for the organization but aren't really part of it; and an Evil Overlord™ at the top. In ANH, Vader and Tarkin shared this role; then, in the next movie, we learned that they answered to an even bigger and badder Overlord.

Goons come in many varieties: faceless, hired, out-of-town, dirty, loyal, disloyal, efficient, incompetent, fanatical, cowardly, etc. They tend to be dressed and armed similarly, except in the special case of pirates, spaceport scum and other rabble, who look alike only in that they all seem to have gotten their mismatched equipment from the local dump. Goons can be quite effective against other NPCs, but against the heroes, there's really no contest. As extras, goons rarely have lines or even names (unless some overeager author mines them for a Tales From anthology). Stormtroopers are the quintessential STAR WARS goons.

For lack of talent, ambition, or both, many never make it out of the minor leagues of villainy. (This is relative: when the leads are blowing up planets, even Admirals and Generals are just supporting characters. If your campaign is less epic in scope, one of these would make a fine main villain.) This category covers everything from swoop gang leaders and pirate captains to Trade Federation viceroys and Imperial officers. They usually have a number of goons under them and report in turn to a superior, whether that's the local Hutt crime boss or the Emperor himself. Henchmen are more colorful than extras, but not as complex as lead characters; they are usually identified by a single personality trait (bullying, scheming, greedy, spineless, smug, cold, sadistic) or habit (always wears white, loves his pet nashtah, spice addict, plays with a knife, can't resist a game of sabaac), or both -- consider Boba Fett, who until recently was just a name, a suit of Mandalorean armor and a hard-case attitude.

Evil Overlords are the ones who pull the strings of all the rest, commanding their Legions of Terror from

their Impenetrable Fortress (which must, nevertheless, be penetrated). They always have their own theme music. They are demanding of their subordinates and failure is dealt with harshly -- Vader is notorious for this, and he warns that "the Emperor is not as forgiving as I am." They are mannerly but not kind: their charm is born of arrogant confidence, and if they offer mercy, it's merely a ploy. They enjoy these cat-and-mouse games, never believing (until it's too late) that their latest victims might turn the tables on them. The surest way to earn their full and terrible wrath is to not die on schedule and/or to foil their Master Plan.

Every Villain has a Master Plan; it's part of what makes them a Villain. You should break this plan down into small, clearly-definable goals/tasks for the Villain and his minions. For example, perhaps the first step in becoming Emperor is being elected to the office of Supreme Chancellor, which in turn might require arranging a crisis on one's home planet to gain sympathy from the bleeding-hearts in the Senate. Whatever his goal, the Villain should constantly be working toward it and coming up with new angles to replace those that the heroes have closed off. A good Villain is never idle, nor does he simply react to what the heroes do: he anticipates them, like Vader and Fett at Cloud City.

Underlings may have their own agendas as well, separate from or even in opposition to their master's. Court intrigues are everywhere in STAR WARS, from Jabba's cronies to the corrupt Senate. The Emperor kept his lackeys plotting against each other so that they would not unite against him, and both he and Vader tried to use Luke against the other. In villain circles, a show of weakness is an opportunity, practically an invitation. Looking over your shoulder for the knife comes with the job.

A final word: perhaps the hardest part of playing a STAR WARS villain is making them properly cinematic and Evil-with-a-capital-E without straying into camp. Goons and other small fry can be jokes, but the villain must be truly menacing. A villain that

isn't feared or taken seriously loses much of his effectiveness. You want Darth Vader, not Dark Helmet.

So... alternate ruthless brutality with polished subtlety, the iron fist with the velvet glove. Lay your web to ensnare the heroes. Find out their weaknesses (in-character; no cheating) and exploit them. Tempt them with what they most desire, or threaten things they hold dear. Get those they trust to betray them. Dangle hope and then snatch it away. Be smart and dangerous, though not infallible. Make them hate you enough to do anything to bring you down -- maybe even compromise their own principles (because if they do that, you've won). And always, always, be dramatic and memorable.

Mysticism

"Life creates it. Makes it grow. Its energy surrounds us, and binds us. Luminous beings are we, not this crude matter."

Spirituality is quite literally a Force in the STAR WARS universe, with clearly defined Light and Dark aspects. Though intangible, it grants very real benefits to its champions on each side. To the vast majority of beings in the Galaxy, however, it remains mysterious and ineffable -- something to be sworn by or scoffed at, but not truly understood.

Han Solo once boasted that no mystical energy field controlled his destiny, and even Obi-Wan Kenobi noted that while the Force partially controls the actions of those attuned to it, it also obeys their commands. When Jedi speak of "the will of the Force," they refer not to a consciousness or being, but to an



overall flow and structure to events (which just happens to favor dramatic outcomes; on a meta-level, the Force may be thought of as what enforces the Laws of Drama in the STAR WARS universe). Free will is not negated; each person's fate is still theirs to make, for good or ill. The Force merely guides or nudges and places more power in the hands of its students, giving them a greater say in how the story goes. It is not a religion, as many outsiders assume, nor is it a god. The Force just is.

Both the Light and the Dark exact a price from their servants. The Jedi is required to put her own passions and desires aside, to always serve the common good before herself. Even "positive" emotions like love can be dangerous if they keep her from thinking and acting clearly. The Light Side requires patience, serenity and discipline. The Sith, by contrast, is encouraged to indulge his every selfish whim at the expense of those weaker than himself. His appetites and hatreds, rather than being sated, grow ever stronger until he is their slave rather than their master. The Dark Side offers instant gratification at the cost of never knowing peace or contentment.

Characters and places associated with the Light should embody calm, quiet, wisdom, balance and grace; purity, openness, light, growth, natural beauty and/or perfectly arranged sparseness, like a Zen garden. Their presence relaxes, refreshes, and promotes thought. Pure water (cool and deep, flowing or still) and fresh air are the elements of life.

The Dark Side is, well, dark: blackness, shadows, lies and false appearances, hidden things that avoid

the light. The cold touch of death or terror on the back of your neck. Anger, jealousy, madness, manic energy. Unclean things that glisten and drip and fester. Decadence, decay, corruption, gluttony and lust. Fire, hot or cold, is the element of destruction, burning all it touches (including those who handle it carelessly).

Deathtraps

"They must be dead by now. Destroy what's left of them."

Walls that close in, planks to be walked, machines that freeze heroes into trophies for the villain's lair, pits where the hero must fight the pet monster -- about the only thing missing from this list is Luke being strapped to a laser table while the Emperor cackles, "But before I kill you, Mr. Skywalker..."

Some old favorites work just fine as-is: the compartment that locks and starts filling with water or sand or poison gas, the floor that slowly retracts into the wall to reveal something bad underneath, the inexorably descending ceiling (with or without spikes), the ticking bomb in the same room as the tied-up PC. Others can be given new life

by adding a twist:

say, walking the plank above a sea of dunes instead of brine. Or the heroes awaken/escape from their cells only to find that the ship is locked on course for some navigational hazard like a moon or a meteor storm.

Naturally, all of the escape pods are missing.

Of course, any good deathtrap has a means of escape for our heroes. Sometimes it's having a friend on

the outside to come to your rescue, perhaps in disguise as one of the villain's men (or droids); sometimes it's defeating the mechanism of the trap through cleverness, finding a flaw that the creator overlooked. Sometimes it's just a matter of waiting until the gloating villain isn't looking, or having some concealed gadget or weapon that he doesn't know about. One tip is to put the PCs into the trap at the end of a session (in true Saturday-matinee cliffhanger fashion) so that your players have until next time to think of a way out. Besides, it's more exciting that way.

Duels

**"The circle is now complete. When I left you, I was but the learner; now I am the master."
"Only a master of evil, Darth."**

In STAR WARS, duels are not fought with blasters at ten paces (not on-screen, anyway -- however, see the original Han Solo Trilogy by Brian Daley for several fast-draw gunfights), but with the flashing blades of lightsabers. A proper site

for a lightsaber duel must have at least one

convenient bottomless

pit, precipice, or narrow

catwalk without safety handrails.

Dim lighting or back-lighting

is also

appropriate.

Blast doors

or force fields

may close off

avenues of

escape. Chasms,

multiple levels

and loose

objects allow

the duelists

to show off

their leaping

and telekinetic

abilities.

Some ideas for dueling locations that haven't appeared in the movies (yet):

* Near or inside an active volcano

(an old fan favorite, look for it in Episode III)

* Atop an airship or spaceship (either moored or in flight)

* The tilting, shaking deck of a ship that's falling into a planet's atmosphere, the gravity of a black hole, etc. (alarms and explosions in the background as it starts to break up)

* In zero gravity (see the gladiator duels on the Wheel, in the Marvel comics)

* Above or in water (perhaps with nasty local life in it)

* A dark cave (drop-offs, stagnant black pools, stalactites and stalagmites, and mynocks or worse lurking in the back)

* A huge mining or industrial complex (gargantuan machinery, moving platforms and ore buckets, hissing steam, flammable chemicals)

* The roof of a palace or office tower (any time of day or night)

* A theater or opera house (balconies, trapdoors, sandbags, curtains, high catwalks)

* A ruined, long-forgotten Sith or Jedi temple (see the Jedi Knight computer games)

For still more ideas, watch old swashbuckling movies. Lucas did.

Little People

"Yub yub!"

Jawas and Ugnaughts and Ewoks, oh my! Little people are a staple of STAR WARS, mostly because they are comical to "big folk." RotJ had more little people in the cast than The Wizard of Oz and made Warwick Davis a small star (pun intended); not only did he get the title role in Willow, he appeared again in the Ewok TV movies and was a walk-on in TPM. Kenny Baker has been with us since the beginning as the man inside R2-D2. Back in 1977, the children of some of the crew dressed up as Jawas; today, computers are used to create chittering pit droids and their Trade Federation counterparts. Jar Jar Binks is something of a very tall

One tip is to put the PCs into the trap at the end of a session (in true Saturday-matinee cliffhanger fashion) so that your players have until next time to think of a way out.

little person, in terms of his function in the story. Even wise Master Yoda first appears to be just a peculiar green gnome, chuckling at his own jokes and wrestling with R2 over trinkets.

To make a long story short: if you're looking for some quick physical comedy, find a way to include some little people getting into mischief. It's not politically correct, but it's very STAR WARS. Or, as with Yoda and the Ewoks, you can fool the PCs into not taking a short character seriously and then surprise them. "Judge me by my size, do you?"

Monsters

At the other end of the scale, we have big ugly things with sharp pointy teeth. ANH had the Dianoga in the trash compactor, ESB the Wampa and the giant space slug, and RotJ the Rancor and the almighty Sarlaac. TPM has the Opee Sea Killer and the other denizens of the ocean depths, and AotC its arena beasts.

Like most things in STAR WARS, the monsters are big: the smallest are two or three times as large as a man, and the largest is literally big enough to be mistaken for part of the terrain and to swallow spaceships whole. Their motivation is simple bestial hunger; they are often too fearsome to face head-on and must be outmaneuvered or out-thought. The PCs may have to be content with getting just a piece of the monster -- an arm, a tentacle -- and driving it off long enough to escape. In fact, they may never see the whole thing... and perhaps that's for the best.

Travel

"Kid, I've flown from one side of this Galaxy to the other. I've seen a lot of strange stuff..."

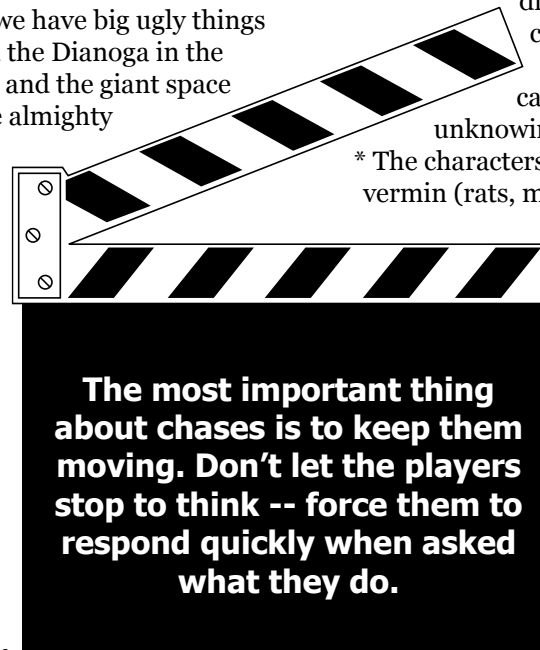
It's a big Galaxy, and with each act of the story, your players should get to see a new part of it. Different locales on the same planet will do, but the miracle of hyperdrive allows you to send them to two or three different worlds in the course of a single adventure. If the purpose of a journey is just to get the heroes to the next location, you can gloss over it with some starlines and a brief interlude of what's happening elsewhere. If you'd like to make things more complicated, though, here are some ideas:

* The vehicle breaks down, crash lands, falls over and

dies, etc., requiring the characters to repair it or to continue on foot/using the backup hyperdrive, often through a hostile wilderness with limited supplies.

- * An ambush interrupts the journey (an Interdictor, pirates, restless natives, a monster).
- * The characters are not traveling to a specific place, but are in search of a person or thing whose location is uncertain.
- * The characters are under a deadline or tight schedule and must avoid delays.
- * The most direct route passes through some sort of hazard.
- * The characters must find a guide to lead them to the secret place.
- * Something unexpected is found at the destination (a blockade or siege, a battle, no planet, a holiday, a disaster, someone else looking for the characters and/or what they seek).
- * The characters are found to be carrying contraband (knowingly, unknowingly, or planted by the searchers).
- * The characters discover that they've picked up vermin (rats, mynock, et al) or something much nastier (anything from an ALIENS xenomorph to an assassin droid or a bomb).

"Oh no, the Rancor!"



Travel plus action equals a chase. All of the movies have chases: the very first scene of the original trilogy is the Tantive IV being pursued by a Star Destroyer. We then race through the corridors of the first Death Star and the girders of the second; the white concourses of Cloud City and the green forests of Endor; the sandstone canyons of the Boonta Classic and the towering spires of Coruscant; the rings of

Geonosis and, perhaps most famously, the drifting mountains of an asteroid belt near Hoth. The terrain may be hazardous, the pursuers armed, or both. The characters may split up or be separated; they may find themselves faced with an impassable obstacle like a cave-in or an air shaft and have to find another route. They may also discover (often too late) that they are being led, flushed or herded into a trap.

The most important thing about chases is to keep them moving. Don't let the players stop to think -- force them to respond quickly when asked what they do. Omit unnecessary die rolls whenever possible; nothing slows a scene down like rolling for every pod racer or TIE fighter. Concentrate on the ones "on screen" at any moment. Make up a cheat sheet with relevant stats for all the participants so that you don't have to stop to check your notes or the rulebook.

Romance

"I love you!"
"I know."

Ah, romance. It can be one of the most rewarding experiences in roleplaying -- who doesn't enjoy being in love? But it is also one of the hardest things to do right in a game (and the most embarrassingly awful if it isn't). Luke's infatuation with the recorded image of the Princess propels him into the story, and the triangle between him, Leia and Han is a major subplot for the rest of the trilogy, just as the forbidden romance between Anakin and Padme is at the core of the prequels. Love can be a source of strength for characters, as well as making them do "crazy" things like sneaking into the villain's fortress to free their loved one.

First of all, it helps to have one or more female players in your group. As a rule, ladies tend to be more interested in and comfortable with romance plots than the usual pack of snickering teenaged boys (ages 13 to 30). On the other hand, it's just as possible that your most serious and romantic roleplayer is a guy, and the girl is playing a ruthless bounty hunter who only cares about money and killing. Beware stereotypes.

Whatever the gender of your players, it is important that you not force a romance upon them; they may be uncomfortable with this sort of plot, or just not interested. Wait for them to let you know they're looking, either by telling you straight out or by pursuing a likely NPC. You can also raise the issue yourself by talking with your players outside the game. What matters is that everyone in a romance should be a willing

participant.

(You can stretch consent a little to saddle a PC with an unwanted suitor -- someone who follows them around professing his/her undying love, sending them gifts, and generally being a nuisance. Don't keep it going past the point where the player isn't having fun, though.)

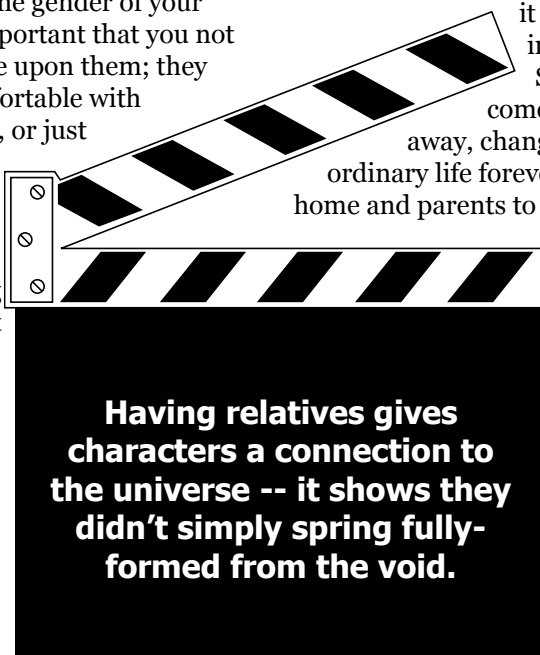
It may be that one PC takes a fancy to another. The risk here is that sometimes the player is using the game to flirt with someone else at the table, which crosses character lines and is usually a bad idea. Again, this works only if both players are willing and can keep game events separate from real life.

Finally, keep in mind that it's about romance, not sex. Kissing should be as far as it goes. Further events, if they occur at all, happen off-screen. If your players cannot handle this subject maturely, it's best to avoid it entirely.

Family

"The Force is strong in my family. My father has it. I have it. And... my sister has it."

The STAR WARS movies are essentially the story of the Skywalker family. Like most myths, it begins humbly, in the outlands. Strangers come from far away, changing the boy's ordinary life forever. He leaves his home and parents to seek a destiny which he does not yet understand. He faces trials, grows to manhood, comes into his power, finds love... and falls from grace, with tragic results. Years later, the story repeats itself. Slowly the boy learns the truth of his past.



Having relatives gives characters a connection to the universe -- it shows they didn't simply spring fully-formed from the void.

Finally the son faces his father, his reflection, and together they finish the uncompleted quest begun a generation ago. The mother, the wife and the sister all play their parts, giving the Hero their love and support while understanding that he must ultimately leave them behind on his lonely journey.

You're going to want to tell your own story, of course, and it probably won't be about the Skywalkers. Still, as the plots of Jedi Knight and X-Wing Alliance demonstrate, it can be very effective to make family a part of that story. Having relatives gives characters a connection to the universe -- it shows they didn't simply spring fully-formed from the void. (Who were their parents? Do they have any brothers or sisters, aunts or uncles? What was their childhood like?) Sometimes relatives are the only ones you can trust. Or maybe you don't trust them, or even particularly like them... but they're still family.

Having a family member get into a jam immediately gives a PC a personal stake in the situation; having one killed by the Villain gives the character an excellent reason to hate him; and if the Villain is family, then it's the PC's responsibility to confront him and put an end to his evil, one way or the other.

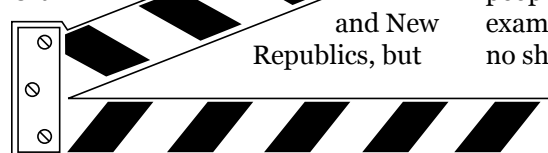
Kinship isn't just a matter of blood. Han Solo is, for all intents and purposes, "family" to Chewbacca. To most Jedi, the bond between master and apprentice is the closest thing either will know to having a real parent or offspring. Perhaps in the course of your game, a PC will end up adopting, or adopted by, an NPC or fellow PC.

History

"For over a thousand generations, the Jedi Knights were the guardians of peace and justice in the Galaxy. Before the dark times... before the Empire."

It is said that to a European, a

hundred miles is a long way, and to an American, a hundred years is a long time. In STAR WARS, history is measured in hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands of years. On this scale, the thirty-odd year reign of the Galactic Empire is little more than a blip, a mere Interregnum between the Old



A good encyclopedia or history text should provide plenty of inspiration. Toss in some ancient ruins, dusty tombs, derelict spacecraft, and forgotten mysteries.

an important era just the same. This timeless civilization, ancient yet futuristic, is the backdrop for Lucas's modern fairy tale. "Once upon a time, in a far-away land..."

The recorded history of the Galaxy begins with the discovery (or rediscovery) of hyperdrive and the dawn of the current cycle of interstellar civilization; what came before, including the origin of the Human species, is now forgotten. Many more years passed before the reign of the last great warlord, Xim the Despot, and his defeat by the founders of what would become the Old Republic. Taking Kenobi at his word, the rise and decline of the Republic covered another twenty millennia or so. Think about that for a moment: a continuous interstellar government twice as old as the first cities and agriculture in the Middle East and the arrival of nomadic hunters in most parts of the Americas. No wonder that no one believed it could ever fall.

All of this vast span of time is your blank canvas on which to paint. If that intimidates you, you can start small, or with broad strokes, and fill in more detail later. A good

encyclopedia or history text should provide plenty of inspiration. Toss in some ancient ruins, dusty tombs, lost cities, derelict spacecraft, and forgotten mysteries. And don't be stingy with zeroes in your dates and legends.

Things have history too.

STAR WARS was one of the first SF universes that looked used, as if people actually lived in it. The best example is the Millennium Falcon: no shiny silver rocket ships here, just a rustbucket of a freighter with hot-rod engines that's been tinkered with by at least two owners over a dozen years or more. C-3PO (or at least his frame and many of his parts) was manufactured nearly a century before the Battle of Yavin... and new 3PO droids are still being made and sold. New models of things do come out -- remember Luke's lament about his speeder -- but the old ones remain in use for

much longer than our cars or computers. Well-cared-for items will often be passed down from one generation to the next: "Your father wanted you to have this, when you were old enough."

Some of this long service life is because technology in the STAR WARS universe is positively stagnant, at least compared to the frantic pace of 20th/21st century America. Space travel, artificial intelligence and blasters have all been around for thousands of years with only incremental improvements and the occasional breakthrough or new application. They have had computers for as long as we have had fire. Thus, there is less of a need to have the newest and best. As always, war drives innovation -- consider the evolution of the starfighter from the Z-95 Headhunter to the TIE Avenger -- but even that progression is less dramatic than, say, the shift from propellor-driven fighter planes to jets in just a few decades of our own history. When adding new ships or other technology to your game,

resist the urge to make it significantly or overpoweringly better than that currently in use. Different is good, like Yuuzhan Vong biotechnology or weird Sith artifacts, but a parade of invincible munchkin super-weapons gets boring fast.

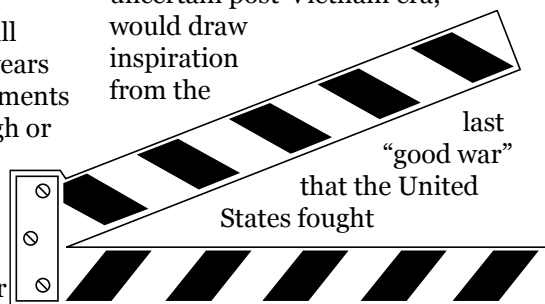
Finally, give your players the chance to make some history, or at least be witness to it. Let them take part in the major battles of the movies, or come up with new events that are similarly important. Every barfight doesn't have to be significant, but the final face-off against the Villain(s) should be. Give them the sense that they are living in interesting times, when one person, one action, one victory or defeat can decide the fate of a planet or a Galaxy.

Battles

"General, prepare your troops for a surface attack."

Both the D6 and D20 rulebooks have sections dealing with the mechanics of running battles and keeping them manageable and relevant at the player scale. Rather than cover that ground again, this section will deal with the historical background and tone of armed conflict in STAR WARS.

It is hardly surprising that Lucas, making his movie in the uncertain post-Vietnam era, would draw inspiration from the



Different is good, like Yuuzhan Vong biotechnology or weird Sith artifacts, but a parade of invincible munchkin super-weapons gets boring fast.

(and from the many movies about it which he saw as a child and a film student). The starfighter scenes have always owed much more to World War 2 dogfights than authentic space combat. The attack on the Death Star is taken, nearly shot for shot, from *The Dam Busters* (1954), while the earlier scene with Luke and Han fighting off a flight of TIE fighters might just as well have been set in the ball turrets of an Allied bomber over Germany.

The Battle of Hoth is an armor assault on entrenched infantry with close air support; in this case, the armor is AT-ATs rather than panzers and the aircraft snowspeeders rather than P-51s. The ground segment of the Battle of Endor has often been compared to Vietnam (stone-age primitives defeat the Emperor's finest through traps and cunning), but feels to this author more straightforward than that ambiguous guerilla conflict. The basic concept, a commando raid against a bunker which turns into a pitched battle between the bunker's defenders and the native allies of the commandos, could also be set in the French woods or a Pacific island jungle. Meanwhile, up in space, a fleet engagement unfolds with fighters and battleships duking it out with their opposite numbers.

While some of the battles of the prequel trilogy fit this pattern, others seem to come from an earlier era of warfare. In TPM, two Napoleonic armies meet on a convenient grassy plain; when an initial barrage of cannon fire proves ineffective, both armies line up abreast and one marches forward at a walk while the other holds its ground. At point-blank range, both sides open fire and the battle lines disintegrate into a confused, screaming melee with soldiers and mounts running in every direction. AotC gives us a civil war between a newly-created "Grand Army of the Republic" and a secessionist Confederation. If this trend continues, Episode III may well feature a quagmire of stalemate and bloody slaughter right out of the trenches of "The War to End All Wars", in which both sides throw thousands of expendable droid or clone troops into the mud to claim a single objective and early promises of a quick end to the conflict are forgotten or quoted in bitterness. (The presence of helicopter-style air cavalry, as seen in AotC, may keep things from bogging down quite this badly -- but it still seems likely that the Clone Wars will not have a winner so much as one combatant laid out on the mat and the other bloodied and wobbling on his feet.)

As with all things STAR WARS, when searching for ideas, go to the source material. In this case, your local video store should be able to provide plenty of war movies for the appropriate period(s) which you can file the numbers off of and drop into your game; there are literally too many to mention here.

Both TPM and RotJ have, as their climax, battles

that take place simultaneously on many levels at once: on the ground, in space, a lightsaber duel in the Villain's fortress, and the spiritual conflict that accompanies the latter. Will Luke turn his father back to the Light, or fall

to the Dark himself? Will Obi-Wan let his anger and grief consume him so he can avenge his master?

Can Anakin put aside his feelings for Padme and complete the more important

mission? These battles progress more or less in synch: when the heroes on the ground are threatened

or captured, so are their allies elsewhere, and when the tide turns, it does so at all levels. The Villain is slain, his troops are routed, and his citadel gets blown up with a lot of fireworks.

This makes great cinema, and gives all the players in your group something to do -- the Jedi can duel with the Villain, the bounty hunter can lead the ragtag army, the pilot can try to take out the vital target -- but is very hard to coordinate. At the very least, it requires that you be rigorous in

allotting everyone equal screen time and cutting between them at good "cliffhanger" moments, letting tension build and not getting bogged down in arguments or lots of dice rolls. You also have to be able to guide the action at all levels toward Setback and/or Victory without rendering the performance of your players irrelevant. In short, it's a technique for experienced GMs who want to do something Really Big.

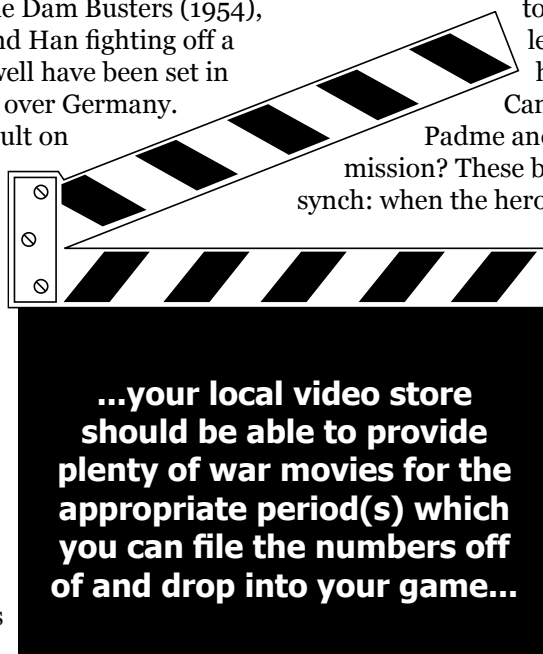
And when it's all over, don't forget to give them the Victory Celebration and hand out some medals.

Droids

"These aren't the droids you're looking for."

Droids are everywhere one goes in the civilized Galaxy, though usually in the background. Mechanical servants of the organic beings who hold them in varying degrees of esteem, from friendship to hatred, droids fill an uncomfortable niche somewhere between slave and appliance. Some are made in the image of their creators, while others are purely and sometimes bizarrely functional in form. The question of whether droids are in some fashion alive (and, if so, at what point that "life" begins) is as hotly debated in certain circles as similar questions are today, but most people never even bother to think about it. Droids -- tireless, helpful, expendable, disposable -- make life easier and more convenient for their masters, and that's all that matters.

The movies mostly avoid "the droid question," except in the cantina scene -- where the "coloreds" are denied entry -- and to show that the Good Guys usually treat



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their droids with more care and respect than the general population, to whom they are at best tools to be replaced when they break or wear out and at worst subjects for casual torture and destruction. Other authors (as far back as Archie Goodwin's unforgettable bounty hunter Valance in the first few issues of the Marvel comic) have addressed the issue more directly, including how prejudice against droids might extend to cyborgs. It's up to you whether you want to tackle droid slavery in your game or, as Lucas did, sweep it under the rug and get on with the adventure.

Droids serve the same purpose in the saga as the peasants in Kurosawa's *The Hidden Fortress*, Bottom the weaver and his fellow laborers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a certain clumsy Gungan, and many others born of the "common clay": to get mixed up in the Hero's quest, to bear witness to his deeds, and to make the occasional crude remark, surprisingly insightful observation, or unexpected sacrifice. They are the faithful sidekick, the fool, the Everyman, the comic relief. They fuss and fidget, take pratfalls, have panic attacks, get swallowed and spit up by monsters, and stick their fingers into power sockets. They also stand watch, deliver messages, keep the Hero's sword safe until he needs it, heal his wounds, open locked doors that bar his way, and impress the natives. By their humble and ordinary nature, they help to define how mythic the Hero is. And when two of them get together, you have a comedy team.

Not all droids are friendly and helpful. Those in the service of Evil are soullessly efficient spies, torturers and soldiers. (The squealing mouse

droid is a notable exception.) They rarely speak, though many emit an Ominous Hum; those that do have voices sound harsh, buzzing, flat, cold... in a word, inhuman. They are usually a glossy black, like the carapace of some malevolent insect, although bone-white (like a Roy Harryhausen skeleton) and steel grey are also popular lately. Some have too many eyes, others not enough.

Battle droids can be used the same way in the prequel era as stormtroopers were in the classic trilogy: just toss in another dozen whenever the action slows down. Larger ones, like droidekas or Robocop's ED-209, provide heavy firepower and may serve as guards for the Villain's fortress or as hints that the PCs should get moving. Probe droids are the eyes of their masters, ever-vigilant scouts and sentries. Assassin droids make deadly

opponents for an entire party, and fine Jedi hunters: they can't be life-sensed or mind-tricked, and (as Kyle Reese said of *The Terminator*) they "absolutely will not stop... EVER... until you are dead."

Sooner or later, your PCs will (voluntarily or not) wind up in front of some powerful figure. Maybe it'll be a Hutt gangster or a Gungan boss; maybe they'll be "invited"

to dinner by a Dark Lord; maybe they're summoned before the Jedi Council, or the Senate, or the Emperor himself. The person giving the audience is clearly

In Charge here, surrounded by their allies and retainers, and PCs should tread lightly and be polite. That goes double if they've come to ask a favor, in which case a little groveling would not be

out of order. (If a player insists on trying to start a fight, feel free to have his character beaten senseless, stunned into next week, dropped into the Rancor pit, the blaster yanked out of his hand, etc.)

The audience is an opportunity for your well-spoken and diplomatic players to shine, while the combat types cool their heels and try not to be too nervous about having their weapons taken away. It's a chance for mortal enemies to meet and converse without sabers or blasters being drawn (well, not right away at least) and for the Villain to do a little gloating. It's an excuse for a little pomp and ceremony and a really cool Throne Room set.

Sacrifices

"Ben? ... NOOO!"

Heroes should not throw their lives away foolishly, but there may come a time when they are asked to give them in a worthy cause; when it is, in fact, the right thing to do. Ben lets himself be struck down to inspire Luke, to allow him and the others to escape, and to counsel him

Audiences

"You will take me to Jabba now."

Droids...get mixed up in the Hero's quest, to bear witness to his deeds, and to make the occasional crude remark, surprisingly insightful observation, or unexpected sacrifice.

The audience is an opportunity for your well-spoken and diplomatic players to shine, while the combat types cool their heels and try not to be too nervous about having their weapons taken away.

in the future through the Force. Han submits to being frozen in carbonite to protect his friend and the woman he loves. Luke steps off the platform, to what he almost certainly believes will be his death, rather than join Vader. Anakin exchanges his own life for his son's, destroying the Emperor and redeeming himself.

The decision to martyr a character should always be made by the player, who in turn has a responsibility to not do so lightly, out of boredom or frustration or a desire to grab some spotlight time. It should never be the only available option, though it might be the most dramatic and effective one. Even if the character is spared by some twist of fate, there should be some permanent cost; a lost hand, for example.

Complications

"I've got a bad feeling about this."

Oops, that door panel you just blasted also controlled the bridge. Oops, the cave you hid your ship in was really the mouth of a giant monster, and now your hyperdrive still isn't working. Oops, you stepped on a twig while sneaking up on that stormtrooper. Oops, the Gungan... no, let's not go there.

A lot of the action in STAR WARS is the Heroes making it up as they go along, bouncing from one fine mess to another. The only time they really have a plan is when they're attacking the Villain's fortress, but even then, things go wrong, forcing them to improvise.

Even if you aren't using the Wild Die from the Second Edition of the WEG rules, it can be good to throw the players a curve now and then. Here are some examples taken from the movies to get your creative juices flowing.

- * An awful secret is revealed.
- * The information the PCs have been given is false or misleading.
- * A PC's senses or mobility are temporarily impaired: blind, deaf, hands or feet tied together,

etc.

- * Someone touched something they shouldn't have.
- * "There's always a bigger fish." The plot goes deeper/higher than you thought.
- * "Always two, there are." Just when you thought the Villain was defeated...
- * A storm or other danger forces everyone to take shelter. Perhaps enemies end up sharing the same refuge.
- * Mistaken identity: a PC is believed to be someone or something else (a god, for example). Or they discover that they're dealing with an imposter or decoy.
- * Someone unconnected to the plot tries to pick a fight with the PCs.
- * An attack or rescue that is going too well turns out to be a trap.
- * An important piece of equipment malfunctions, usually at the worst possible time.
- * A "victory" actually furthers the Villain's plan.
- * A wild swing or shot hits something else, with impressive results. Maybe a little too impressive.

For more on the whys and wherefores of complications, see below.

Hollywood Logic, or, God is an Iron

"How're we doin'?"
"Same as always."
"That bad, huh?"

And now, some final words from a friend of mine:

"If committing gluttony makes you a glutton, then God is an iron."

STAR WARS is a swashbuckling serial where the heroes are assured of victory so long as they act heroic. The thing to remember about heroes is they are people who come through in times of great crisis; those crises, of course, are often either caused directly by the heroes or result due to unforeseen circumstances of their actions or the actions of those around

them.

Many people running SW games run them like dungeon crawls, with the emphasis not on heroics or saving the day but on grabbing treasure and experience. But if the GM does not reward heroism and punish fecklessness (or, in a Dark Side campaign, reward villainy and punish weakness), then the essential heart of STAR WARS is lost.

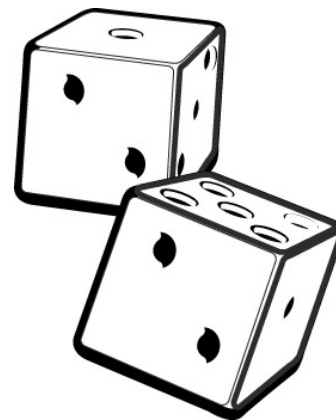
The key points, then, are as follows:

1. If the heroes act suitably daring, without being foolhardy or abandoning all common sense, let them get away with it.
2. If the heroes fail to act daring, point out that their life expectancy is linked to the entertainment of the audience, and it's not wise to bore the GM.
3. Whatever the heroes do has consequences; the alert GM should remember this and be prepared to have those consequences bite them in their collective behind later.
4. Also, those consequences should be used to provide gratuitous coincidences and ironic meetings just at the dramatic moment to bail the characters out or to advance the plot(s).

and finally:

5. If your players groan during the session, but leave laughing, you're doing your job right."

Good night, everyone. Enjoy your meal.



The University of Sanbra Guide to Intelligent Life

The Gryps'gar

By: Rob "Frobi-Wan Kenobi" Froberg

From the Desk of Professor Eliss

During my first tenure at the University of Sanbra's Sentient Studies Department as I was working on the first draft of the Guide to Intelligent Life; I met a very interesting young being in one of my Xenobiology courses. And while he was heralded as the smartest Gryps'gar ever to leave Gryps to this day I still wonder how he managed to pass the university's entrance exams. I once interceded on his behalf after another student, a young girl from Naboo if memory serves, accused the Gryps'gar of devouring her pet Voorpak as a snack. In his defense I pointed out that Gryps'gars refuse to eat the meat of any animal that isn't at least double their size. How he maintained this diet during his studies is a question I never had the courage to ask. - Tem Eliss

Appearance and Biology

Gryps'gars have very muscular humanoid bodies that stand over 2 meters tall and are covered with a layer of fur that ranges from light to dark brown. Tan or black fur is uncommon but not unheard of and an extremely rare occurrence is white furred Gryps'gar. Large leathery wings protrude from their shoulders that allow them flight these wings usually have the same general colorization as the Gryps'gar's fur. Both their hands and feet end with large claws used both during the hunt and climbing the large mountain ranges of Gryps that the Gryps'gar call home. Their faces are very feline in appearance with a mouthful of sharp teeth and keen triangular ears that sit atop their heads. Gryps'gars usually have short tails but a few have been born with long ones. Most Gryps'gar wear only a belt, relying on their fur to protect them from the elements.

Temperament

The Gryps'gar are a very stoic people. They are very devoted to their families and friends. Their trait of protectiveness of those around them borders with the Wookiee life debt. They are an easily trusting people but with the average Gryps'gar living more than 500 standard years, it takes a long time for them to forget and forgive past transgressions.

Any Gryps'gar would die before being placed in shackles or into the servitude of another being. Recent history can show many examples of Gryps'gar going insane, at least in the eyes of onlooker, when law enforcement officers brought out binders as standard operating procedure calls for. While in this state a Gryps'gar will do anything to ensure their freedom,

although that usually means physically and by the path of least resistance. When the rare occurrence that a Gryps'gar is captured; they will stop at nothing to destroy their captors.

History and Culture

The mountain ranges that tower above the seemingly gentle plains of Gryps are the ancestral home to the Gryps'gar. In their language Gryps'gar means: "people of the world." This is because the plains are filled with giant beasts that vary in size from 5 to 50 meters and spell certain death for a lone Gryps'gar. It is for this reason that the Gryps'gar hunt the plains only in groups. Some number as small as half a dozen while the largest have been in the sixty or seventy number range. The younger and more inexperienced the group the larger it is.

The Gryps'gar have knowledge of the Force though the shamanistic teachings of the Gryps'anima, which means in their language "the soul of the world." While the Jedi Knights have not interfered with the teachings of the Gryps'anima they do share the same basic tenants of listening to the will of the Force or anima as they call it and using it for only good ends.

However, as with must things there have been a few bad apples that have caused the Gryps'gar pain and suffering on a global level. During on of these dark times over half of the species population was enslaved by the fallen shaman Vol'du'gar. Only the sacrifices of thousands of enslaved Gryps'gars is what lead the resistance against Vol'du'gar to victory. Experts believe that this is the event that has conditioned the Gryps'gar people to respond how they do to slavery.

Politics

The Gryps'gar have a very loose global confederacy that is made up by representatives of the many prides scattered throughout the mountains of Gryps. These prides are made up of three to twenty family units and



most Gryps'gars loyalty to their tribes is second only to their loyalty for their families. Most of the political leaders from the smallest Pride Chief to the High Chieftain of the Gryps'gar Confederacy keep at least one member of the Gryps'anima shaman as an advisor. To not have one would mean that the leader has dishonored him/herself or the pride.

Trade and Technology

Before their contact with Old Republic first contact specialists the Gryps'gar had just begun a very primitive space program that launched solid fuel rockets into orbit. Once contact was established they quickly absorbed galactic standard technology in all areas except hunting. They consider eating the meat of an animal that was brought down by something other than a Gryps'gars claws dishonorable. They also had a very lucrative big game hunting businesses that ran on Gryps even during the Imperial blockade.

Gryps'gar in the Galaxy

Most Gryps'gar found off of Gryps will be bodyguards, mercenaries and sometimes scouts of one type or another. Even some practicing members of Gryps'anima (Force Adepts) may be found traveling the stars.

Homeworld Stats

Gryps

System/Star: Gryps/Gryps'sidus (Yellow)

Type: Terrestrial

Atmosphere: Breathable

Gravity: Standard

Climate/Terrain: Arctic to Temperate/Mountains, plains

Length of Day: 26 standard hours

Length of Year: 374 standard days

Sapient Species: Gryps'gar

Population: 1.2 billion

Major Exports: big game creatures, mercenaries/bodyguards

Major Imports: high technology

Attribute Dice: 12D

Dexterity 1D+1/3D+1

Knowledge 2D/4D

Mechanical 1D/3D+2

Perception 2D/4D+2

Strength 3D+2/5D+2

Technical 1D/3D+1

Special Abilities:

Claws: Gryps'gar claws do STR+1D damage.

Hunting Senses: Gryps'gars receive a 1D bonus to their Perception when they use their above average senses of sight and hearing.

Enslavement Conditioning: When a Gryps'gar is in a situation where they face enslavement they fly into

an uncontrolled fit of rage. This is the same as the Wookiee Berserker Rage described on page 218 of the Second Edition Rulebook Revised and Expanded. A character may make a Willpower check at a Difficulty of 20 to not go into a rage when placed in that type of situation.

Move: 10/12 (walking), 16/18 (flying)

Size: 1.8-2.3 meters tall

Commoner Stats

d20 System

Gryps'gar Commoner 1; Init -1 (-1 Dex); **Def** 9 (-1 Dex, +0 Class); **Spd** 10m walking, 16m flying; **VP/WP** -/12; **Atk** +1 melee (1d3+2, claws), -1 ranged (by weapon); **SV** Fort +1, Ref -1, Will +0; **SZ** M; **FP:** 0; **Rep:** +0; **Str** 12, **Dex** 8, **Con** 12, **Int** 6, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10.

Equipment: Various personal belongings.

Skills: Listen +4, Knowledge (varies) +2, Read/Write Gryps'oro, Speak Basic, Speak Gryps'oro, Spot +4, and Survival +2.

D6 System

Average Gryps'gar: Dexterity 2D, **Knowledge** 2D+1, **Mechanical** 1D, **Perception** 3D+1, **Strength** 4D+2, **Technical** 1D. **Move:** 10m walking, 16m flying.

Eras of Play

Old Republic Era

Gryps was discovered a mere 100 standard years before the outbreak of the Clone Wars. Situated on the Outer Rim, not being anywhere near a major hyperspace trade route meant that the planet rarely sees uninvited guests. However, trade was good for independent trading concerns and it's during this that most of the Gryps'gars left home to see the galaxy.

d20 Species Summary

Str, +2 Con, -2 Dex, -4 Int: Gryps'gar are very tough and strong but lack fine motor skills and have below average intellect.

Medium-size: As Medium-size creatures, Gryps'gars have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Gryps'gar base speed is 10 meters walking and 16 meters flying (average).

Claws: Gryps'gar making an unarmed attack gain a +1 to the damage roll. If they have the Martial Artist feat they gain +2.

Hunting Senses: Gryps'gar gain a +2 species bonus on all Listen and Spot checks due to their finely tuned hunting senses.

Enslavement Conditioning: When a Gryps'gar is in a situation where they face enslavement they fly into an uncontrolled fit of rage. This is the same as the Wookiee Rage described on page 33 of the Revised Core Rulebook. A character may make a Will Save at a DC of 20 to not go into a rage when placed in that type of situation.

Automatic Languages: Basic, Gryp

Rise of the Empire Era

Once the Dark Side begins to shroud the galaxy many of the Gryps'anima shaman urge wayfaring Gryps'gars to return home. Once the Clone Wars ended many believed they could return to their former lives; however the worst was yet to come for the Gryps'gar people.

Rebellion Era

In the early years of the Empire attempts were made at enslaving the Gryps'gar - all of them met with extreme failure. So the Empire blockaded the planet and it's during this period that smuggling became a common place occurrence on Gryps. Some Gryps'gar did manage to become members of the Rebel Alliance used their strength to aid in the fight against the Empire.

New Republic Era

After the blockade was ended many Gryps'gars stayed on their homeworld instead of returning to the stars, but they do have representation in the New Republic Senate. The few that left usually devoted their lives in ensuring that what the Empire did would never be able to happen again.

New Jedi Order Era

Gryps has been spared as of yet in the Yuuzhan Vong's crusade into the galaxy. And while many Gryps'gars have volunteered in the fight against them one has to feel sorry for that first Yuuzhan Vong landing party to reach Gryps. Although what monstrosities could they create with the terrors that roam the grasslands of Gryps?



Special Ops: Jedi Hunter

By Mark Fiorovanti

"A'alee, a Kel'Dor Jedi knight, sat in his Jedi starfighter prepping it for flight. There was a warning in the back of this mind, and he instinctively reached out with the Force. He found something lurking in the shadows of a transport on the far side of the hangar. He gave the suggestion to the individual that he had business elsewhere and off the figure wandered off. The Jedi continued about his business, and noticed the starfighter wouldn't complete the startup sequence. A'alee was a little confused, until he heard a familiar metallic rolling sound from the shadows..."

"Times were looking increasingly bad for the Jedi, the Clone Wars were well underway and more systems were rallying to the Confederacy. A messenger rushed through the Jedi temple on Coruscant, and

finally he came upon A'alee's master. They exchanged a glance, and the messenger's mere presence confirmed what A'alee's master had felt the night before. A'alee was now one with the Force."

Since there have been Jedi, there have been those who have plotted their demise. The most prominent of those have been the Sith, who very nearly destroyed the Jedi Order. Each Hunter has their own reasons, and those who seek to remove these Jedi are not always those who you would think. Some are people who simply seek revenge. Others want the entire Jedi Order destroyed. Still others just have a grudge against a single individual, and some are just plain afraid of the Jedi and their powers.

Long before the Emperor created the Imperial Inquisitors, there was a sect of Force users who dedicated their lives to hunting the Jedi. By many, these individuals are considered to be "a few holocrons short of an archive." Nothing can be further from the truth for by and

large these individuals are intelligent, cautious, coldly methodical, and deadly when the appropriate moment arises. The most successful of these individuals have kept their identities carefully hidden and never have faced off a Jedi in melee combat. They know if their identities are discovered they will perish. If they were forced into melee combat with a Jedi, they are on the Jedi's ground and they will surely lose. If they wanted to become juggernauts of destruction they could easily study the Sith arts, and come to a spectacular end.

During the time of the Empire, the Emperor employed many Inquisitors who hunted down Jedi in hiding, but their tactics were less than subtle. While the Inquisitors' methods may have been messy, they usually worked and that was the only thing the Emperor cared about. Besides the Imperial Inquisitors there were the Hunters. Also employed by the Emperor, they never returned with a live Jedi. The hunters are slightly different from the Inquisitors. They were never trained in the Jedi

arts as they never attempted to turn a Jedi to the Dark Side.

Those who hunt the Jedi have learned to notice a Jedi's weaknesses and take advantage of them if the situation arises. To the Jedi hunter, the rewards can be as great as the dangers.

Those who hunt Jedi have diverse backgrounds and varied methods. They range from simple sniper attacks, to long and involved traps which slowly wear down a Jedi, or from attacks that focus on placing the Jedi in an environment where they have no experience or lose their advantages or straight forwards attacks that appear to have no planning.

Hunting Jedi is one of the most dangerous professions one could imagine, and is fraught with difficulties the likes of which most cannot comprehend. First off, your target is gifted in the Force and the Force is a powerful ally. Second thing, the Jedi has been trained to the point where their body is a weapon and their mind is a fortress. But their training has weaknesses if you know where to look. There are many ways to attack a Jedi and no two Hunters employ the same methods. Before attacking the target, they usually spend a fair amount of time collecting information about the Jedi's abilities, habits, past missions, future missions, and attempt to find weaknesses.

There are a variety of methods that have been successfully used when hunting Jedi. The most commonly thought of and least successful is the simple front on Lightsaber attack with larger numbers. First this method requires a large number of Force users who are skilled in Lightsaber combat, and finding a single individual who is skilled in Lightsaber combat and is not a Jedi is an amazing feat. Secondly this is for which a Jedi has trained their entire life. In short even with superior numbers, the Hunters would be fighting the Jedi on his turf and on his terms, the odds of survival are not very high.

Ranged weapons are an excellent method for attempting to attack a

Jedi. This is the method that the Ack'lay used when Hunting Jedi. It removes them from their preferred form of combat, close quarters melee with a Lightsaber. The Hunter can more easily obtain the element of surprise. This form of attack has a point that must be considered; if the element of surprise is lost, the Jedi will quite probably be able to deflect any of the Hunters attacks, as they have received quite extensive training in deflecting blaster bolts. This problem can easily be corrected; do not use a blaster weapon, rather a better choice would either be an explosive warhead or a slug-thrower. The explosive projectile may not be an option if the Hunter is attempting to reduce the amount of collateral damage, and may be rather difficult to smuggle onto the planet where the Jedi is operating. The slug-thrower is a better option as they can be silenced, they cannot be deflected, but they are susceptible to being intercepted by a Lightsaber. This method of attack also has the advantage that the Hunter never has to be close to the target Jedi.

Another feared group of Jedi Hunters are the Nexu sisters; they use a method that has proven fairly successful; the practice of creating traps with a rather appetizing piece of bait. In short you create a situation where the Jedi is forced out of their element and into an area where they do not know and do not have any experience. A variety of different traps can be created with laser gates, GravTraps and Repulsor-mines, but some of these objects are rather tricky to get through customs without raising some eyebrows. After the target Jedi has been taken out of their environment and shaken, they can be more easily be attacked with a variety of weapon systems designed to slowly wear down the target.

The Nexu sisters are particularly dangerous because of the traps and tactics they use. First they attempt to maneuver the Jedi into an area that has no easy exits. Then they have two assassin droids appear (in reality the assassin droids are two highly modified Destroyer Droids that have been equipped with increased

shields, specialized weapons, advanced tactical processors and Ysalamiri support frames). Once the Droids begin their attack, the sisters then attempt to break the target's concentration with mental assaults. Either way it is only a matter of time before the Jedi falters from the mental assault or one of the Droids attacks penetrates the Jedi's defenses.

Class Features

Weapon Proficiency: The Jedi Hunter is proficient with the following types of weapons: blaster pistols, blaster rifles, simple, slug throwers, and vibro weapons.

Jedi Target: A Jedi Hunter is familiar with the ways of the Jedi, and may attempt a Knowledge (Jedi lore) check to confer a bonus on various aspects of hunting and dealing with Jedi. The DC for the check is 15, and for every 5 the DC is beat by they gain a bonus of +1 (up to a maximum of half of their Jedi Hunter levels rounded down, but may not less than 1). This bonus remains in effect for 2-rounds/per level in the Jedi Hunter class, at that point the Jedi Hunter must make another Knowledge (Jedi lore) check if they want to continue using this special quality.

Track: At 1st level the Jedi Hunter knows the way of the Jedi well would to understand how they move, travel and the things they leave behind. The Jedi Hunter may apply the Jedi Target bonus to all Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Gather Information and Sense Motive checks when attempting to locate or deal with the target Jedi.

Defense: At 4th level the Jedi Hunter has come to more fully understand the Jedi's ways of attack and has learns to deal with these attacks in all of their forms. When in combat the Jedi Hunter may apply the Jedi Target bonus to their Defense score, and they bonus also applies to their all of their saves involving any Force ability, skills, and/or feats which are used during combat.

Attack: At 7th level the Jedi Hunter fully understands how the Jedi defend themselves in combat

and from parties who mean them harm. At this point the Jedi Hunter may apply the Jedi Target bonus to any attacks made against the target Jedi. Also the Jedi Hunter is also better able to burn through any defenses the target may have constructed and the DC for any save the Jedi is required to perform is increased by the Jedi Hunter's bonus. The DC increase may only be applied on Force abilities, feats and/or skills the Jedi Hunter has triggered.

Extended: At 10th level the Jedi Hunter is intimately familiar with the behavior of the Jedi and fully understands their methods and motives, and those that they interact with. The Jedi Hunter's target bonus increases to three quarters of their Jedi Hunter levels (rounded down), and they may also apply the Jedi Target (Defense) and Jedi Target (Attack) special abilities to a number

of the Jedi's allies, that is equal to twice the Jedi Hunter's Wisdom modifier (if their Wisdom modifier is less than 1, they may only apply the extended bonus to one of the target Jedi's allies). The bonus when dealing with their allies is only one quarter of their Jedi Hunter levels (rounded down, but not less than 1).

Preferred Weapon Selection: At 2nd level the Jedi Hunter selects a weapon that they have proficiency with, and because of their familiarity with this weapon they gain a bonus damage of +1d4 when making attacks with this weapon against the target Jedi. If this weapon is used against other characters damage is dealt without this bonus. They Jedi Hunter may repeat this select every three levels thereafter (i.e. again at 6th and 9th level). They may select a different weapon or the same weapon, if the same weapon is selected the bonuses

stack.

Bonus Feat: At 3rd level the Jedi Hunter gains a bonus feat, which they must select from the following list; Alertness, Aware, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge (Mobility), Force Mastery (High Force Mastery), Force Shot, Frightful Presence, Guided Shot, Hatred, Headstrong, Iron Will, Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Malevolent, Martial Arts (Improved Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts, Advanced Martial Arts), Mind Trick, Point Blank Shot (Far Shot, Precise Shot), Rage, Skill Emphasis (Any class skill), Sith Sorcery, Track, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus. Before selecting a feat the Jedi hunter must meet all of the requirements, and they may repeat this selection ever three levels thereafter (i.e. again at 6th and 9th levels).

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special Abilities	Defense	Reputation Bonus
1 st	+0	+0	+1	+2	Jedi Target (Track)	+1	+0
2 nd	+1	+0	+2	+3	Preferred Weapon +1d4	+2	+0
3 rd	+2	+1	+2	+3	Bonus Feat	+2	+0
4 th	+3	+1	+2	+4	Jedi Target (Defense)	+2	+0
5 th	+3	+1	+3	+4	Preferred Weapon +1d4	+3	+1
6 th	+4	+2	+3	+5	Bonus Feat	+3	+1
7 th	+5	+2	+4	+5	Jedi Target (Attack)	+4	+1
8 th	+6	+2	+4	+6	Preferred Weapon +1d4	+4	+1
9 th	+6	+3	+4	+6	Bonus Feat	+4	+2
10 th	+7	+3	+5	+7	Jedi Target (Extended)	+5	+2

Special Ops Template: Young Padawan

By Grimace

Template Type: Padawan-in-training

Character Name:

Player:

Species: Human

Sex: Age: 7

Height: Weight:

Physical Description:

Background: When you were "younger" one of the

famous (and mysterious) Jedi came to visit your home. They were interested in your luck that always seemed to help you out of tight spots. Your parents acted strangely towards the Jedi, but after you answered some questions and took a funny test, they decided that it was best that you went with the Jedi. What a thrill it's been to travel off of your home-world and see a whole bunch of new aliens! At first it was fun, but now the Jedi put you in a school, although it's not like the school that you were expecting. They're teaching you to do things with your mind and something called the "Force".

Personality: You like things that are fun, and things that you can actually do. You've got a happy attitude, but you've learned that if you're quiet and listen, you will

learn about things that most people don't normally pay attention to. You do like playing games, though, which normally drives the adults nuts; hide-and-seek is your favorite.

Objectives: To finish the tiring schooling so you can be a Padawan. To see your parents again.

A Quote: "I wanna play hide-n-seek now." "That guy has bad thoughts."

Connection With Other Characters:

DEXTERITY 3D+1

Dodge
Running
Melee Combat
Melee Parry
Lightsaber

PERCEPTION 2D+2

Hide
Search
Sneak
Con

KNOWLEDGE 2D+1

Alien Species
Survival
Languages
Planetary Systems

STRENGTH 1D+2

Climbing/Jumping
Stamina

MECHANICAL 3D+1

Repulsorlift Operation
Starfighter Piloting
Communications

TECHNICAL 2D+2

Computer Programming
First Aid
Droid Repair
Repulsorlift Repair
Lightsaber Repair

Special Abilities: *Force skills: Control 1D and Sense 1D.* You start with only 3 Force powers.

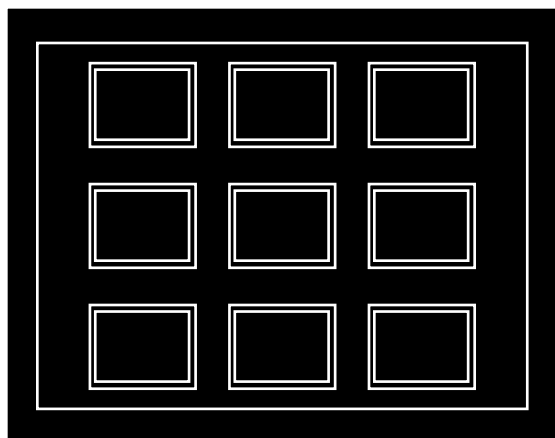
Move: 8

Force Points: 2

Force Sensitive: Yes

Dark Side Points: 0

Equipment: Training Lightsaber (Damage 2D+2), 10 Credits, Comlink, Training "Concentration" pendant, favorite toy from home



Special Ops Archetype: The Force Guide

By Joseph Al-khazraji

The thrill of exploration carries with it many dangers. Whether it is the unfamiliar terrain of a newly discovered planet or the untamed wild of a colonized world, there is always a need for someone with the ability to navigate the unfamiliar without jeopardizing the mission at hand. While most run of the mill scouts can perform this function, sometimes the job requires the skills of one who can call upon the Force to aid him in his duties. The Force Guide is such a person.

When exploring the unfamiliar, the Force Guide can use the Force to discern any impending dangers so they may guide their charges through the area safely. The Force Guide is also able to communicate with any alien beings, calming possible hostile encounters with beings unaccustomed to interlopers in their territory.

Roleplaying Notes

Force Guides come in different varieties throughout the Galaxy. A great number may hire themselves out to exploratory missions where First Contact is a distinct possibility and the unknown terrain of an alien planet is an intriguing mystery. To such explorers, the services of a Force Guide are highly sought, making the pay for these missions very lucrative.

In other situations, Force Guides can be found roaming the wilds entirely of their own volitions, at home amongst the wilderness of a world teeming with life. They choose to live the life of hermits, living off the land, communing with the natural world in order to immerse themselves in the living Force to better understand the nature of living things.

Other often Force Guides find themselves in the service of military organizations or mercenary groups where safe travel through unknown terrain can mean the difference between life or death. These guides are adept at following the tracks of enemies and using the Force to gather intelligence about enemy troop and vehicle movements. Sometimes, these Force Guides also find themselves on extremely dangerous infiltration missions, guiding a commando force through strange terrain in order to further mission goals. Not surprisingly, Force Guides in this line of work command a high price for their services, and with good reason.

Variant Abilities

Variant 1: Expert Trailblazing

Instead of gaining the Extreme Effort ability, the Force Guide can increase the effectiveness of his Trailblazing ability. With Expert Trailblazing, the Force

Guide negates the -2 penalty for every three people he leads through the wilderness. This allows him to guide large numbers of people through unfamiliar terrain without problems.

Variant 2: See Tracks

Instead of gaining the Skill Mastery ability, the Force Guide has learned to adapt his ability to see images through the Force by focusing his Farseeing ability on a particular set of tracks to see who (or what) was responsible for them. Therefore, the Force Guide gets a +4 competence bonus on Farseeing checks used in this

manner.

Variant 3: Animal Understanding

Instead of gaining the Evasion ability, the Force Guide can learn to develop an instant rapport with animals and beasts of any kind. He may use Sense Motive checks on Animals and gain a larger understanding as to the animal's motives beyond the simple dichotomy of friendly-hostile attitudes. The Force Guide does this by examining the animal's body language and listening intently to any sounds the animal might make.

Level	Class Levels	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus	Special Abilities
1	Sco 1	+0	+1	+1	+1	+2	+0	Bonus Feat
2	Sco 1/ Fa 1	+0	+2	+2	+3	+3	+0	Force Training
3	Sco 2 / Fa 1	+1	+3	+3	+4	+3	+0	Trailblazing
4	Sco 2 / Fa 2	+2	+4	+4	+5	+4	+0	Force Training
5	Sco 2 / Fa 3	+3	+4	+4	+5	+4	+0	Bonus Feat
6	Sco 3 / Fa 3	+4	+4	+4	+5	+5	+0	Heart +1
7	Sco 3 / Fa 4	+5	+4	+4	+6	+5	+0	Force Training
8	Sco 4 / Fa 4	+6/+1	+4	+4	+6	+5	+1	Uncanny Dodge (retain Dex bonus)
9	Sco 4 / Fa 5	+6/+1	+5	+5	+6	+6	+2	Force Weapon +1d8
10	Sco 4 / Fa 6	+7/+2	+5	+5	+7	+6	+2	Skill Emphasis
11	Sco 5 / Fa 6	+7/+2	+6	+6	+8	+7	+2	Skill mastery, extreme effort
12	Sco 5 / Fa 7	+8/+3	+7	+7	+8	+8	+2	Comprehend Speech
13	Sco 6 / Fa 7	+9/+4	+7	+7	+8	+8	+2	Evasion
14	Sco 6 / Fa 8	+10/+5	+7	+7	+9	+8	+2	Force Talisman +2
15	Sco 6 / Fa 9	+10/+5	+7	+7	+9	+8	+3	Bonus Feat
16	Sco 7 / Fa 9	+11/+6/+1	+8	+8	+10	+9	+3	Uncanny Dodge (can't be flanked)
17	Sco 7 / Fa 10	+12/+7/+2	+9	+9	+11	+10	+3	-
18	Sco 8 / Fa 10	+13/+8/+3	+9	+9	+11	+10	+4	Bonus Feat
19	Sco 8 / Fa 11	+14/+9/+4	+9	+9	+11	+10	+4	Force Secret
20	Sco 8 / Fa 12	+15/+10/+5	+10	+10	+12	+11	+4	Skill Emphasis